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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 24th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 6 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
*later:* Mr. Burity (Vice-Chair) ..... (Angola)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Tribute to the memory of Vitaly I. Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

1. On behalf of the Committee, **the Chair** paid tribute to the memory of Vitaly I. Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations.

2. *At the invitation of the Chair, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

3. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) expressed appreciation for the tribute paid to the memory of Vitaly I. Churkin.

**Organization of work** (A/C.5/71/L.22)

4. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the proposed tentative and provisional programme of work for the first part of the resumed seventy-first session, prepared on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/71/22).

5. **Mr. Sevilla Borja** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was committed to thorough consideration of all agenda items. Delegations should engage in a spirit of compromise to reach a common outcome in the best interests of the Organization and the Member States. Deferring decision-making on problematic issues did not reflect well on the Committee. The Group was concerned at the status of documentation for the resumed session. Despite noticeable improvements, the late issuance of important reports was a chronic problem. Reports must be issued in a timely manner in all languages, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to facilitate the Committee's deliberations and ensure that important subjects received due attention. The progress made in recent years should not inspire complacency but encourage all concerned to do even better.

6. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the leadership shown by the Secretary-General, who should assist Member States in the implementation of essential initiatives endorsed by the main bodies of the United Nations, ensure that the Secretariat was more transparent, efficient and representative, and apply the principle of equitable geographical distribution. All the matters in the proposed programme of work were of great importance to the Group, in particular the accountability system in the Secretariat, procurement, the modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), the construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, the resident coordinator system, information and communications technology (ICT), standards of accommodation for air travel, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and after-service health insurance. The Group appreciated the effort put into the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on procurement activities in the United Nations Secretariat (A/71/681) and gave high priority to improving opportunities for vendors from developing countries.

7. The Group would ensure that the Committee's discussion of accountability resulted in a more efficient Organization. Member States would always cooperate with an effective and transparent Secretariat. An adequate response to the lessons learned in relation to UNMEER was required; global coordination, prevention mechanisms, the capacities of local authorities and communication tools must be improved. The Committee must complete its tasks within the allotted time and negotiations should be conducted in good faith as part of the intergovernmental process. Parallel meetings should be avoided, since small delegations, including most members of the Group, were unable to attend more than one meeting at a time. The facilitators must avoid closed negotiations in small configurations.

8. **Mr. Funes Henríquez** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, said that the proposed programme of work contained matters of great importance to the Community, including the programme budget implications of the draft resolution on modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/71/L.58), accountability, procurement and standards of accommodation for air travel. The Committee should consider the programme budget implications of the draft resolution as soon as possible, since the preparatory work would start in March 2017. Accountability must be enhanced to improve the administrative and budgetary functioning of the Organization. The Community welcomed the report of JIU for 2016 and programme of work for 2017 (A/71/34) and reiterated that the Unit must remain independent. The Member States had proved at the main part of the current session that, when the political will existed, even the most complicated tasks could be completed in good time.

9. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia and the Republic of Moldova, said that the States members of the European Union supported the Secretary-General's call for a more efficient United Nations. Simplification, decentralization, flexibility, compliance, transparency and accountability were essential, and resources should be devoted to substantive activities to make the Organization more effective. The timely issuance of documentation in all languages was essential to inclusivity in the Committee's work. The Bureau should engage with those responsible for document production and with the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to ensure that the work of the Fifth Committee was not hampered by delayed documentation. The Committee should manage its time better so that it reached decisions by consensus during normal working hours.

10. The Committee had before it important matters, some deferred from previous sessions. Senior managers must be held accountable for mandate fulfilment, risk assessment and resource use. The ICT strategy was essential to improving the effectiveness of the Organization. Procurement rules should be transparent and potential vendors should be able to compete to offer the best value for money through the latest technology, in line with the principles of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. The environmental footprint of the United Nations must be reduced. The States members of the European Union would work with other Member States to enhance the contribution of JIU. The Committee must resolve the financing of the resident coordinator system, particularly in light of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

11. **Mr. Fu** Daopeng (China) said that the Committee must support the implementation of United Nations mandates while enhancing efficiency. The Secretariat should strengthen internal management, respect budgetary discipline and put Member States' contributions to good use. The Committee once again faced the problem of the late submission of documentation; the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee should coordinate so that documents were circulated as early as possible.

12. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that progress towards an accountability system, the financing of after-service health insurance, the ICT strategy and standards of accommodation for air travel were of particular importance to his delegation. The Secretariat must diversify the origin of goods and services to encourage developing countries to participate in procurement. The Committee should ensure that the resources for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration were provided in a timely manner. To ensure that the preparatory process for the negotiations was inclusive and started in March 2017, stakeholders should give high priority to the related analysis and decision-making. The challenges faced by the international community required coordinated action by delegations. Member States must use all forums to preserve multilateralism as a means of reaching agreements and show that it was the best way of solving common problems. They should respond to the threat of misguided nationalism with more dialogue and better decisions, for the benefit of the Organization.

13. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that the Committee should ensure that the reform initiatives approved by the Member States succeeded. It should approve the resources necessary for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1874 (2009) to perform their mandates. The Committee's discussion of the contingency fund should result in better fiscal discipline at the United Nations. Her delegation would seek to make further progress in the reform of ICT, procurement, accountability and standards of accommodation for air travel.

14. Cost containment depended on access to information in real time, and she welcomed the inclusion in the Secretary-General's report on the status of implementation of the ICT strategy for the United Nations (A/71/400) of a five-year budget projection that included peacekeeping. The Secretary-General should adjust the planning assumptions to refine the cost projections as the strategy was implemented. Although Secretariat-wide compliance with the strategy was a challenge, coordination between the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Field Support had improved. The Secretary-General should provide the Committee with indicators of progress and benefits, based on performance metrics, and his next progress report should contain detailed

updates on the implementation of the strategy by all Secretariat entities. JIU, whose fraud detection mechanisms were essential in safeguarding the Organization, had made recommendations on fraud and had drawn attention to challenges related to administrative support services and service centres.

15. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that the Committee had before it such important matters as special political missions, revised estimates for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic and the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58, but must nonetheless complete its work within the allotted time. Documents should be submitted in a timely manner, in accordance with resolution 70/247, so that the Committee could conduct its discussions responsibly.

16. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that the Secretary-General's report on procurement activities (A/71/681) deserved close attention. General Assembly resolution 69/273 contained instructions regarding the analysis of various bidding methods in aviation service procurement and the need for clarification related to the implementation of environmentally safe and sustainable procurement in the Organization. His delegation concluded that the related tasks had not been performed, since the information was not provided in the report. It was concerned that certain procurement initiatives were being implemented without clear criteria, indicators of economic effectiveness or evidence that they resulted in savings.

17. The implementation of the ICT strategy should continue, in line with the General Assembly decisions on the matter. ICT systems should be less fragmented and costly and their efficiency should be increased, including through the abandonment of obsolete or redundant software. The five-year projection of the budget allocation for such technology should be refined. The progress in establishing an accountability system left much to be desired; given the importance of the matter, the Committee should discuss it annually. Since the Secretary-General's report on managing after-service health insurance (A/71/698) contained no evidence that the cumulative approach was better than the current pay-as-you-go system, the matter should be further examined; it would be premature to take any decisions on it at present. In the discussions related to the report of JIU (A/71/34), his delegation would maintain its principled position of supporting the activities and paying close attention to the reports and recommendations of the Unit, which should receive the resources it needed to perform its mandate.

18. **The Chair** said that she took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that it would be adjusted as necessary to make best use of available time as the first part of the resumed session progressed.

19. *It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 115: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments** (*continued*)

**(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions** (A/71/101/Rev.1/Add.1) (*continued*)

20. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to a note by the Secretary-General (A/71/101/Rev.1/Add.1) informing the General Assembly of the resignation of Mr. Omaish (Jordan) from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, effective 10 February 2017. The Government of Jordan had nominated Mr. Hyassat, whose candidature had been endorsed by the Group of Asia-Pacific States, to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office, which would expire on 31 December 2018.

21. *Mr. Hyassat (Jordan) was recommended by acclamation for appointment to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment by the General Assembly and expiring on 31 December 2018.*

**Agenda item 140: Joint Inspection Unit** (A/71/34, A/71/34/Corr.1 and A/71/779)

22. **Mr. Kramer** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of JIU for 2016 and programme of work for 2017 (A/71/34), said that the Unit sought to draw on its unique, system-wide perspective to deliver results that responded to the needs of a broad range of participating organizations, which required that it maintain a diverse portfolio of reviews. As reflected in the work completed in 2016 and envisaged for 2017, the Unit was focusing on strengthening the framework for promoting integrity in United Nations system organizations and on achieving a more balanced emphasis in its workload between management-related and programmatic issues, particularly in support of development objectives and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while maintaining adequate capacity to conduct detailed reviews of individual organizations.

23. The Unit had issued 10 system-wide reports and 1 report covering a single organization, including a

report on the support provided by the United Nations system for small island developing States; a report on fraud prevention, detection and response that contained a specific and actionable framework to promote integrity and accountability in United Nations system organizations; a review of the audit function; and an examination of knowledge management arrangements in the system. JIU had also carried out independent system-wide evaluations of aspects of operational activities for development, which had required it to engage in new forms of collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, made possible by innovative funding arrangements. He hoped that the recently issued report on administrative support services and the role of service centres would inform the Committee's consideration of the implementation of a global service delivery model. As reflected in a series of management letters, JIU had engaged in dialogue with participating organizations and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) that had focused on the high number of recommendations made by the Unit, as well as measures that participating organizations could take to increase the rate of acceptance and implementation of those recommendations.

24. The Unit's programme of work for 2017 included five new system-wide studies focusing on, inter alia, strengthening integrity and accountability and supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also included a review of whistle-blower protection policies and two system-wide reviews carried over from 2016 relating to donor-led reviews and travel policies, respectively. In line with the horizontal approach to cooperation demanded by the 2030 Agenda, JIU would draw on the comparative advantages afforded by its system-wide perspective and independence to carry out complex projects; develop a programme of work that addressed current challenges; and implement working procedures that reinforced quality requirements at each stage of the reporting cycle.

25. Efforts must be made to resolve the long-standing issue of funding for the maintenance of the JIU website and web-based system for tracking the acceptance and implementation of recommendations, for which no budgetary resources had been allocated. The lack of flexibility in the JIU budget made it impossible to accommodate even relatively insignificant non-staff costs. The General Assembly should resolve the matter by requesting the Secretary-General to provide the relevant services or to include the related requirements in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

26. While the General Assembly had traditionally provided strong support for the work of JIU, specific consideration of its reports had declined in recent years. He therefore hoped that the Assembly would request a review of that situation and welcomed the Committee's consideration of two JIU reports at the current session.

27. **Mr. Herman** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the report of JIU for 2016 (A/71/779), said that CEB remained dedicated to assisting the Unit in performing its critical functions. In accordance with the statute of JIU, the CEB secretariat played a key role in compiling and transmitting the comments of the Secretary-General and United Nations system organizations on the Unit's system-wide reports and was committed to ensuring the timely issuance of the related notes of the Secretary-General. Owing to its close partnership with the secretariat of the Unit, CEB received JIU reports shortly after publication, and its efforts to elicit more prompt responses to requests for comments from participating organizations were contributing to a more effective preparation process. It was also increasingly common for the CEB secretariat to work closely with JIU inspectors during the preparation of draft reports in order to ensure a more comprehensive outcome reflecting broad-based agreement.

28. The Unit's increasing focus on system-wide issues had led to closer collaboration between CEB and JIU, to which the CEB secretariat contributed within its limited capacities. In addition, each year, CEB solicited suggestions from agencies for projects to be incorporated in the Unit's programme of work and proposed topics for its consideration. Moreover, in 2016, the Secretary-General had, once again, participated in a consultative capacity in the selection of inspectors to fill vacancies in the Unit.

29. The ongoing dialogue between the secretariats of CEB and JIU had greatly improved mutual cooperation in pursuit of a stronger and more cohesive United Nations system. The Secretary-General would continue to strengthen the Board's close working relationship with JIU, particularly in the light of measures taken to enhance the Unit's system-wide focus and the monitoring of and follow-up on the implementation of system-wide recommendations.

30. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that JIU played a key role in supporting Member States' efforts to enhance the Organization's efficiency, functioning and ability to fulfil its mandates.

31. The Group attached great importance to realizing maximum benefits and efficiencies from the auditing and review activities of JIU, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Board of Auditors. It would therefore seek further information on efforts to enhance coordination among those bodies, particularly with regard to their programmes of work, with a view to reducing overlap in their functions.

32. The system-wide reports of JIU completed in 2016 provided actionable recommendations that would enhance the effectiveness of participating organizations in fulfilling their mandates. In that connection, the Group looked forward to examining the review of the acceptance and implementation of the Unit's recommendations by participating organizations, with a view to improving the efficiency of its work and its impact on the United Nations system. Following the appointment of the new Executive Secretary of the Unit in 2017, the Group would also examine how JIU resources were deployed and the need to enhance the expertise currently available in the secretariat to allow the Unit to carry out its mandate.

33. The best practices of some organizations, including the International Telecommunication Union, in following up on the implementation of the Unit's recommendations should be emulated and shared, with a view to achieving specific outcomes aimed at improving the performance of participating entities. The Group would also seek further information on the reasons for the low rate of implementation of recommendations in single-organization reports and how to reverse that trend. It welcomed the diversity of projects envisaged for 2017, particularly those related to the 2030 Agenda, and looked forward to the Unit's recommendations in that regard.

34. A well-functioning, reliable web-based system for tracking recommendations with accurate, up-to-date information on the status of implementation must be maintained. The Group regretted the limited progress achieved in that regard and would explore options to provide sustainable and predictable funding for the operation and maintenance of the system using in-house expertise, in line with the requests contained in paragraphs 107 and 13 of General Assembly resolutions 70/247 and 70/257, respectively. Taking note of the reported decline in the consideration of JIU reports, the Group would seek ways to improve the Assembly's approach with a view to capitalizing on the work of the Unit.

35. **Mr. Sánchez Azcuy** (Cuba) requested that officials from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Office of Information and Communications Technology should be present during informal consultations on the current agenda item to provide further clarification with regard to the unfulfilled requests of the Assembly referred to in paragraphs 66 and 67 of the JIU report (A/71/34).

**Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017** (*continued*)

*Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (continued)*

*Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels (continued): Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism* (A/71/365/Add.8, A/71/365/Add.8/Corr.1 and A/71/595/Add.8)

*Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017: United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic* (A/71/761 and A/71/811)

36. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council under thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (A/71/365/Add.8 and A/71/365/Add.8/Corr.1), said that in August 2015 the Security Council had adopted resolution 2235 (2015), establishing the Mechanism for a period of one year. The mandate had been extended until 31 October 2016 in accordance with a letter dated 21 September 2016 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/807); accordingly, no resources had been included in the revised appropriation approved by the General Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017. By resolutions 2314 (2016) and 2319 (2016), however, the Council had further extended the mandate until 16 November 2017. As a result, the Secretary-General, in his report, proposed resources amounting to $3,278,800, which would provide for a staffing complement of 26 positions, for the period from 1 November 2016 to 16 November 2017. Pending the Assembly's decision on the proposal, the requirements for the period from 1 November 2016 to 31 March 2017, amounting to $961,900, had been funded under the Secretary-

General's commitment authority for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. That amount was included in the appropriation requested in paragraph 19 (b) of the report.

37. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 under sections 27, Humanitarian assistance, and 36, Staff assessment, for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic (A/71/761), she said that the Mechanism had been established under Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) to monitor cross-border humanitarian operations of the United Nations and its partners in the Syrian Arab Republic. No resources for the implementation of the mandate, subsequently extended until 10 January 2017, had been included in the revised appropriation approved by the General Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017. By resolution 2332 (2016), the Council had further extended the mandate until 10 January 2018. The report contained the proposed resources for the Mechanism for the period until December 2017, amounting to $3,890,000 which would provide for a staffing complement of 42 temporary positions and would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

38. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the estimates under thematic cluster II for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (A/71/595/Add.8), said that the $93,000 proposed for staff costs for the final two months of 2016 were not part of the Mechanism's estimated requirements for 2017 and that the requirements for operational costs should have been better justified. The Advisory Committee nevertheless recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for 2017.

39. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the revised estimates for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic related to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/71/811), he said that, with a slight reduction in the operational costs and the application of higher vacancy rates to reflect the operational realities facing the Mechanism, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the resources proposed by the Secretary-General. It looked forward to the savings that would result from the relocation of the Office of the Chief closer to the operations of the Mechanism.

40. The Advisory Committee noted that the proposed revised estimates had been issued once the new mandate period was already under way. Because another yearly renewal was expected at the end of 2017, the resources for the Mechanism should be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. He recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/236, had noted with concern the piecemeal approach taken to the budget process and had requested the Secretary-General to provide the fullest possible presentation in programme budgets of the resource requirements of the Organization.

41. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, with regard to the Secretary-General's report on the estimates for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (A/71/365/Add.8 and A/71/365/Add.8/Corr.1), his Government condemned the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. The Syrian Arab Republic had acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention because it believed in ridding the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, while emphasizing States' right to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Syrian Arab Republic, during its membership of the Security Council in 2003, had drafted a resolution that the United States and other Western countries had threatened to veto to protect the nuclear arsenal of Israel.

42. Since the start of the Syrian crisis, his Government had repeatedly warned of the threat of the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups and had sent 87 letters to the Security Council, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Joint Investigative Mechanism and other Security Council counter-terrorism committees regarding the provision by certain Governments of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals to armed terrorist groups in Syria. Those bodies' deliberate failure to respond to the use of chemical weapons against civilians in Syria and Iraq by terrorist groups was a gross violation of Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions, in particular resolution 1540 (2004). His Government, which was committed to transparency, had provided all the necessary facilities to international investigators since 2014, as well as scientific evidence and witness statements that proved that the terrorist groups had fabricated those incidents.

43. His delegation rejected the allegations made in recent reports of the Mechanism. The Mechanism had produced no material evidence of the use of chlorine

gas, and its working methods had resulted in technically and legally flawed conclusions that lacked objectivity. The authors had been put under pressure to reflect the interests of countries known for their hostility to Syria.

44. The Mechanism should be funded entirely from the regular budget rather than from the Mechanism's trust fund, which, since it relied on voluntary contributions, would be used in a politicized manner, without General Assembly oversight. The resolutions that had established the Mechanism and extended its mandate had not referred directly to the budget because the Mechanism, as a body established by the Security Council, should be financed from the regular budget. The Syrian Arab Republic had repeatedly warned of the consequences for the credibility of the United Nations and related international entities of politicizing the matter under pressure from certain Western Governments that sponsored terrorism, particularly given that those countries had announced the results of the investigation before the Mechanism had issued its report and their representatives had made inflammatory statements against Syria. Some of those countries were involved in supplying toxic chemicals to armed terrorist groups in Syria, planning the use of those chemicals as weapons against Syrian civilians and military personnel, or concealing the transfer of such chemicals from neighbouring countries. His Government had honoured its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention and had rid Syria of chemical weapons.

45. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, with regard to the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, his Government reaffirmed its principled position regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance to the rightful beneficiaries without discrimination, in line with its Constitution. Syria would cooperate with the United Nations in accordance with the Organization's guiding principles on the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance, in particular respect for national sovereignty, the role of the affected State in supervising the distribution of assistance in its territory, and the principles of neutrality, impartiality and non-politicization. The Secretary-General's report on the estimates for the Mechanism (A/71/761) ignored the real causes of the humanitarian crisis, the proliferation of terrorist groups financed by Governments known to all, and the fact that, in meeting 75 per cent of humanitarian needs in the country, the Syrian Government had assumed its responsibilities towards its citizens despite the unilateral coercive measures taken against it. The large sums mentioned in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee would be better used to increase the proportion of assistance provided through international organizations working in Syria in cooperation with the Syrian Government, the effectiveness of which was proven, unlike the initiatives taken by the United Nations under Security Council resolutions.

46. His Government rejected the Secretary-General's promotion of cross-border assistance, which was ineffective and mostly fell into the hands of armed terrorist groups, thereby increasing pressure on those in need. The promotion of cross-border vaccination operations had cost the lives of many Syrian children through spoiled vaccines or vaccination by non-specialists. His delegation objected to the report's description of the situation in Syria as a conflict and requested the Secretary-General to issue an official correction and in the future to use the term "crisis", which reflected the fact that Syria was facing a terrorist war supported by countries from the region and beyond. The figures used in the report were estimates taken from the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan and did not reflect the reality of humanitarian operations in Syria. The notifications sent to his Government did not meet the minimum standard of credibility with regard to figures, data, number of beneficiaries and information regarding the parties that received and distributed assistance to civilian beneficiaries. His Government rejected the assertion in the report that the Mechanism had monitored and confirmed the humanitarian nature of all consignments without incident or complaint. The report did not take into account the complaints and observations of his Government, which was primarily responsible for the entry of assistance into the country, regarding the Mechanism's inability to verify that cross-border assistance had reached those who needed it; the Secretary-General's latest report on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016) (S/2017/144) had confirmed that terrorist groups had seized cross-border humanitarian convoys travelling to Idlib governorate.

47. The Secretary-General's report on the Mechanism (A/71/761) did not reflect the readiness of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to monitor the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the rightful beneficiaries. His Government objected to the reference in the report to administrative hurdles that hampered such delivery, because the mandate of the Mechanism did not include the delivery of assistance in unstable regions of Syria. The United Nations should not, as the Secretary-

General did in the report, describe the unauthorized groups with which it worked in such regions as "local authorities". The objective and the expected accomplishments set out in the report did not fall under the mandate of the Mechanism. The Secretariat was promoting the Mechanism as part of a media campaign to support cross-border work administered by organizations based in neighbouring countries, even though that work had clearly failed and the audit reports on the accounts of those organizations revealed deep corruption. Financial resources should not be allocated to the Mechanism, which should be replaced by a system under which assistance was provided from within Syria in coordination with his Government. The existence of such mechanisms ran counter to the Charter of the United Nations, since it flagrantly violated the sovereignty and independence of States and constituted intervention in their domestic affairs.

48. **Ms. Aşık** (Turkey), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that her delegation categorically denied the baseless allegation made by the representative of another Member State regarding the Mechanism. The Committee should not be used to politicize or divert attention from the issues at hand. In Syria, hundreds of thousands of lives had been lost and 12 million people had been displaced, a humanitarian catastrophe by any definition. Turkey had assumed more than its fair share of the burden by protecting more than 3 million Syrians who had fled their homeland. It now harboured more refugees than any other country. As the Secretary-General's report stated, millions of Syrians had received food, health supplies and other relief because of the increase in the number of United Nations cross-border humanitarian shipments to Syria. Her Government had cooperated with the Mechanism from the beginning. It worked on behalf of the Syrian people in cooperation with international organizations, in full view of the international community. As the conflict entered its seventh year, international assistance to those trapped in Syria must be increased.

49. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had not mentioned the role of neighbouring countries in his statement. The Committee was not the appropriate forum to discuss the role of Turkey in financing armed terrorist groups in his country. What he had referred to were reports and figures mentioned in the Humanitarian Response Plan, which demonstrated the ineffectiveness of cross-border assistance. The international community was wasting money on a mechanism whose sole purpose was to put political pressure on his Government. The vast disparity in the figures relating to the cross-border assistance delivered through the Mechanism and through the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria revealed the veracity of his comments. Financial and commercial corruption had been revealed in the Mechanism's office in Turkey. He called on the Committee to reconsider the work and effectiveness of the Mechanism.

*Coordination activities of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response* (A/70/737 and A/71/810)

50. **Mr. Carey** (Director, Facilities and Commercial Services Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the lessons learned exercise on the coordination activities of UNMEER (A/70/737), said that UNMEER had been established by General Assembly resolution 69/1 as the Organization's first ever emergency health mission, in response to a joint appeal from the Presidents of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone for coordinated international support for nationally-led efforts to respond to the unprecedented Ebola outbreak. The lessons learned exercise had been conducted jointly between the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the International Peace Institute in response to a request contained in General Assembly resolution 69/274 B. The findings of the exercise had highlighted the critical role of Member States' feedback, including on the monthly reports issued by the Secretariat during the lifespan of UNMEER and in the context of relevant budgetary review processes, in guiding the Mission's efforts to adjust and improve its response to the changing situation on the ground.

51. High-level leadership at the national and international levels had been critical in mobilizing the necessary financial and human resources to scale up the Mission's response. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola had also played an important role in ensuring coherence in response strategies; facilitating the exchange of information among responders; mobilizing resources; and providing continuity in the response by facilitating a smooth transition from UNMEER to its successor, the Inter-agency Collaboration on Ebola. The high degree of inter-agency and cross-department collaboration demanded by the crisis had required effective executive management, and direct access to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General had enabled the Mission's leadership and the Office of the Special Envoy on Ebola to escalate urgent issues for immediate decision-making, intervention and advocacy. Respondents had also highlighted the effective role played by Ebola Crisis Managers at the country level

and the importance of tailoring leadership profiles to operational requirements, which had been reflected in the changes in Mission leadership in line with the requirements of the distinct phases of the outbreak. UNMEER had been expected to provide the operational framework to harness and support the integration of functions performed across the United Nations system, on the basis of comparative advantage and mandated responsibility. In that regard, the Mission had been found to be much more effective in a facilitating role than in an implementing or technical role. Its regional dimension had also allowed it to fill critical gaps in the response at the regional level.

52. The feedback on the structure and coordinating role of the Mission had been less positive. Respondents had criticized the command-and-control approach adopted in the initial stage of deployment, during which the Mission had been perceived as too static and too focused on establishing its organizational apparatus. Once UNMEER had reoriented itself to play a greater coordination role, it had been in a better position to leverage existing mechanisms, capacities and economies of scale, as well as to elicit the buy-in from partners required to provide effective operational direction. In that regard, respondents had recognized that the need for centralized decision-making and command, on the one hand, and for coordination, on the other, were not mutually exclusive. They had also emphasized the importance of building on existing coordination mechanisms and using familiar terminology, in order to ensure integration with actors already on the ground and facilitate continuity in the response.

53. Although necessary owing to the restrictions on air travel to the affected countries, the designation of Accra as the headquarters of UNMEER had contributed to the Mission's perceived detachment from operational decision-making in the affected areas. UNMEER had become more adept at tailoring its presence to actual operational needs in the second stage of deployment, when it had reallocated resources and capacities from headquarters to the affected countries.

54. The Mission had been intended as a temporary measure, as indicated in the letters dated 17 September 2014 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (A/69/389-S/2014/679). In that connection, the lessons learned exercise had highlighted the need for greater understanding, within the United Nations system, of the importance of incorporating and communicating a systemic exit strategy from the outset of an operation to ensure that there were no gaps in the transition and handover to United Nations country teams.

55. The urgency of the operation and the safety threats presented by the situation had posed a number of challenges for delivering support. In particular, in spite of the special measures established to facilitate recruitment and deployment, the Mission had initially struggled to identify and deploy personnel with the specialized skill sets required, which had highlighted the importance of implementing an effective staffing strategy that focused on targeting recruitment efforts to capacity gaps on the basis of an assessment of comparative advantages. Owing to the impact of the outbreak on national systems, inadequate capacities to support in-country medical treatment or medical evacuation had also affected the deployment of personnel. Facilitating the mobility of staff and other responders within the region to ensure targeted coverage of the affected areas had likewise proven challenging, despite the critical role played by air operations in that regard. He expressed confidence that the audit of UNMEER expenditures being conducted by the Board of Auditors would provide the Assembly with assurances regarding the Mission's use of resources and the final drawdown of its operations.

56. UNMEER had been created to provide the logistics backbone and crisis management capacity needed to deliver a unified response to the Ebola crisis. While respondents to the lessons learned exercise had stressed the need for improvements to the Mission's structure and implementation of its mandate, they had recognized the value of the concept of UNMEER and the strategic benefits that it had provided to the response in terms of leadership, facilitation, logistics support and availability of assessed funding. Moreover, there was support for the future establishment of a more streamlined model that leveraged existing capacities and coordination mechanisms while capitalizing on the benefits afforded by a United Nations mission model in terms of emergency response capacity. Lastly, the exercise was not intended to detract from the heroic contributions of United Nations entities and personnel, but rather to provide effective guidance for addressing future crises.

57. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/810), said that the findings of the lessons learned exercise highlighted the need to support local actors on the ground rather than assuming responsibility for their tasks; establish a country-level presence and mission structures that were tailored to the specific needs of each country; strengthen capacity

at the district level; and enhance coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities on the ground. Many of the issues identified during the exercise had been raised by the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the initial budgetary proposals for UNMEER.

58. In view of the compressed timeline for achieving the Mission's operational targets, which had been framed in terms of goals to be attained over 30-day, 60-day and 90-day periods, the Advisory Committee had questioned the need for the large organizational structure proposed for UNMEER, which had appeared to be modelled on the requirements of a more typical field operation with a long-term perspective; the rationale for establishing a large presence at the Mission's headquarters rather than in the affected countries; the reason why the functions of the Special Representative and Head of UNMEER could not have been performed by an incumbent at the Assistant Secretary-General level, under the strategic guidance of the Special Envoy on Ebola; and the reason why existing institutional arrangements, such as the framework for emergency humanitarian assistance adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, had not been used. The Advisory Committee had also stressed the need to promote cooperation among United Nations system entities and strengthen existing inter-agency capacities rather than creating new structures.

59. Overall, the approach taken in establishing UNMEER had not been thoroughly analysed or fully justified, and had resulted in resources being expended on administrative structures rather than operational activities. In addition, the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/737) did not provide the detailed information requested by the General Assembly on the final performance, liquidation and disposal of the assets of the Mission and the Office of the Special Envoy. The Advisory Committee would return to that issue at the time of its consideration of the report of the Board of Auditors on the financial statements of the United Nations for 2016, which would include the Board's findings on UNMEER expenditures.

60. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, at the height of the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the spread of the virus had quickly outpaced the capacity of individual countries and regional and international health organizations, particularly the World Health Organization (WHO), to respond to the crisis. Uncertainty, fear and inadequate capacity and preparedness had led to an ineffective and delayed initial response.

61. The Group appreciated the catalytic role of UNMEER in mobilizing the human and financial resources required for an effective response and in bolstering national operational response capacity in the affected countries. The availability of immediate and flexible funding was essential for filling critical gaps and building synergies among responders. In that regard, she noted with appreciation the efforts of the Office of the Special Envoy to mobilize extrabudgetary resources through the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, as well as the contributions provided by a wide range of international partners.

62. The reports of the Secretary-General (A/70/737) and the Advisory Committee (A/71/810) highlighted a number of challenges encountered in the response effort, including initial confusion regarding allocation of responsibilities; inefficiencies in the use of new mechanisms, which had resulted in loss of time; ineffective community engagement; and the need for proper logistical coordination. When responding to health crises, it was critical to build upon existing institutional and coordination mechanisms, in collaboration with entities already on the ground, such as WHO, United Nations country teams and the African Union. In addition, it was essential to support local actors on the ground rather than assuming responsibility for their tasks; strengthen capacity at the district level; strengthen coordination among entities and support the involvement of implementing partners; and avoid duplicative solutions and structures. Regional organizations had also played a key role in raising awareness of the outbreak and mobilizing political and financial support from countries in the region and the continent in solidarity with the affected countries.

63. In an increasingly interconnected world with porous borders crossed by millions each day, no country was immune from a disease outbreak. The Group therefore hoped that the lessons learned from the activities of UNMEER would guide Member States and the United Nations system in responding to future global health crises.

64. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, noted with appreciation the efforts of UNMEER to mobilize the resources needed to scale up the international response to the Ebola outbreak. The objective of the lessons learned exercise had been to provide feedback and broader insight into how the United Nations system had collectively managed the response. The Group shared the views of

the Advisory Committee with regard to the organizational aspects of UNMEER, including its comments on the lack of coordination and collaboration among entities, the lack of effective support for local actors and issues related to mandate implementation.

65. The ineffective initial response to the outbreak had contributed to the spread of the disease. In that regard, the lessons learned exercise should have emphasized the need to build resilience to protect populations; strengthen the capacities of Member States in cooperation with the broader United Nations system; and establish preventive measures to avoid future crises. In the future, the Organization should establish a global centre for emergency preparedness and response with regional and local chapters; provide support for strengthening the health sector in vulnerable Member States, in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda; strengthen global coordination mechanisms; and avoid reducing the level of resources allocated to the health sector.

66. *Mr. Burity (Angola), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*Information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations* (A/71/400 and A/71/785)

67. **Ms. Riazi** (Chief Information Technology Officer), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the ICT strategy for the United Nations (A/71/400), said that the strategy was a five-year plan to transform the technology environment at the United Nations in support of the Organization's work in core areas. Its primary aim was to harmonize, modernize and strategically rationalize information technology resources across the Secretariat to address the chronic fragmentation of the Organization's systems.

68. In 2016, the Office of Information and Communications Technology had made significant progress in implementing the strategy, including through providing critical support for the deployment of Umoja. It had also strengthened its collaboration with other departments, in particular by working with the Department of Field Support in preparing the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the Office (ST/SGB/2016/11); implementing the 10-point action plan to strengthen information security; and consolidating ICT infrastructure into the enterprise data centres operated by the Department in Brindisi, Italy and Valencia, Spain. The Office had conducted a detailed review of ICT spending and had developed a five-year budget projection. It had also issued 38 policies governing ICT management with a view to bolstering oversight and accountability. In addition, it had deployed new ICT systems to support the Organization's work in the areas of environmental protection; gender statistics; the prevention of drug trafficking and money laundering; financial intelligence and strategic planning; conference management support; news and media analysis; learning management; management of fuel and contingent-owned equipment; and various administrative areas.

69. Thanks to the coordinated governance of the enterprise application centres, 2,340 applications had been reduced to 1,652 between 2014 and 2016, and the implementation of the Exchange/Office 365 hybrid project would result in the retirement of 780 additional legacy systems. Those accomplishments marked the essential completion of the modernization and transformation stages of the strategy, which would contribute to leveraging the full potential of technology in support of the Organization's core work and pave the way for the innovation phase. Nevertheless, continuing difficulties in consolidating ICT resources were contributing to redundant investment in solutions and the creation of organizational silos as a result of the deployment of systems without adherence to established governance. There was also a need to invest in upgrades in key areas, including infrastructure, with a view to deploying innovative solutions. Lastly, the lack of visibility of ICT resources and programmes hindered efforts to strengthen information security across the Secretariat.

70. In 2017, efforts would be made to direct necessary reinvestment toward technological solutions that supported effective mandate delivery in field operations, including innovative technologies in the areas of camp security, convoy protection, situational awareness and the promotion of a common operating vision. While new technologies reached developing countries faster than ever before, they were not necessarily accessible to the majority of people in those countries. A global multi-stakeholder approach was therefore needed in order to bring together technology, people, organizations and programmes under a coordinated framework in support of development at the global, regional and national levels.

71. Although challenges remained in their implementation, the Office's strategic initiatives, including the consolidation of disparate networks and data centres and the harmonization of global sourcing, had the potential to deliver long-term cost optimization benefits. The progress achieved in the first two years of implementation of the ICT strategy was a positive step

toward ensuring the comprehensive, reliable and efficient provision of ICT services throughout the Organization.

72. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/785), welcomed the progress made in implementing the ICT strategy, particularly the issuance of the long-overdue bulletin of the Secretary-General (ST/SGB/2016/11); the improved collaboration between the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Field Support; the establishment of a single, harmonized wide-area network for the United Nations Secretariat; the operationalization of the enterprise application centres and replacement of legacy applications with new, standard enterprise applications; and the inclusion of peacekeeping requirements in the five-year budget projection for the Secretariat.

73. With regard to organizational arrangements, the Advisory Committee expected all Secretariat departments and entities to comply with the ICT strategy, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/262, and with the provisions of the Secretary-General's bulletin. It was also critical to ensure that budgets for all ICT activities were reviewed by the Office before their submission to the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts. In addition, the Advisory Committee stressed the need to achieve all milestones in mainstreaming Umoja and to strengthen in-house capacity in order to ensure a smooth and timely transfer of responsibilities to enable the institutionalization of Umoja support.

74. Departments should ensure that the necessary information security reviews were conducted and that mandatory training was completed by all staff to guarantee the timely completion of the 10-point information security action plan. Future progress reports on the strategy's implementation should include a brief update on the achievements of the regional ICT services of the Department of Field Support in order to provide a comprehensive picture of regional ICT activities. With regard to enterprise application centres, the Secretary-General should strive to further rationalize and reduce the 1,000 applications that were expected to remain in 2020. Lastly, the managers of all Secretariat entities must collaborate with a view to overcoming resistance to efforts to reduce fragmentation and consolidate ICT capacities, as well as in implementing the ICT strategy. The Advisory Committee expected the Secretary-General to exercise strong leadership in that regard.

75. **Mr. Sevilla Borja** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group supported management reforms designed to increase efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, oversight and accountability at the United Nations.

76. The ICT strategy was a pragmatic step towards responding to concerns related to ICT. While progress had been made in strengthening information security and reducing fragmentation and costs related to the deployment of security and monitoring measures, it would be essential to ensure the completion of the 10-point information security action plan. That would allow the Organization to, inter alia, address potential security risks and disaster recovery issues through strong governance mechanisms and to protect itself against mass surveillance, interception and collection of communications and data. The Group would seek further information on the determination made with regard to which ICT activities required central control and which merited operational freedom, as well as details relating to the budget preparation process and implementation of the ICT strategy.

77. The regular budget resources, including resources for special political missions, appropriated for ICT had decreased from $368.1 million for the biennium 2014-2015 to $354.0 million for the biennium 2016-2017. The resources from peacekeeping budgets, including the support account, available for ICT programmes had decreased from $1,002.4 million during the biennium 2014-2015 to $991.8 million during the biennium 2016-2017, while the extrabudgetary resources for such programmes had increased from $26.6 million for the biennium 2014-2015 to $27.0 million for the biennium 2016-2017.

78. The distribution of ICT resources in peacekeeping missions had remained consistent over the previous three fiscal periods: post resources had accounted for approximately 30 per cent; non-post resources, which had been distributed across the equipment category of expenditure, had accounted for 32 per cent; and 38 per cent had been allocated for services, commercial communications and software-related costs. In that regard, the Secretary-General should continue his efforts to reduce the average ICT cost per user through achieving economies of scale and to strengthen capacity-building programmes for staff members, including in peacekeeping missions. The Group would seek further details on the share of the annual Umoja maintenance costs managed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology, which were estimated at $34.9 million and $34.4 million during the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years, respectively. It also concurred with the

recommendation contained in the Advisory Committee's related report from 2016 (A/70/755) that all ICT projects or initiatives with total costs starting from a specified threshold level should be supported by a business case with a level of detail commensurate with the size of the project. The Group would therefore request a list of all ongoing and future ICT initiatives, together with their corresponding costs, benchmarks and deliverables, in order to measure their performance.

79. Acknowledging the improved collaboration between the Office and the Department of Field Support, the Group nevertheless called for greater cooperation between peacekeeping and non-peacekeeping entities on ICT matters. The Group also encouraged the Secretary-General to enhance system-wide collaboration and called on the heads of United Nations entities to consider encouraging the harmonization and sharing of ICT services, in particular at field locations, and to strengthen the ICT capacities of Member States in need of support. It would also be interested to hear more about efforts made by the Office to facilitate the work of the Organization and support Member States, including by providing ICT services to their representatives at all main duty stations.

80. The Group would seek further information regarding the use of systems contracts and enterprise agreements, particularly in the context of local and regional procurement; monitoring of intangible assets management; conformity with procurement rules and regulations; and the implementation of the innovation phase of the ICT strategy. All proposed policy changes to enhance career development opportunities for ICT staff or retain experienced and qualified ICT personnel must be presented for consideration by the General Assembly in the context of the Secretary-General's report on human resources management. Lastly, the Secretary-General must ensure the full implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on ICT matters.

81. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendations and observations on the report of the Secretary-General. As ICT resources were utilized in all aspects of the Organization's work, it was imperative to mainstream related strategies and utilization plans, and to expedite the implementation of reforms aimed at increasing efficiency, effectiveness and transparency at the United Nations. The Group was therefore concerned that the General Assembly's decisions endorsing the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors on ICT matters were often implemented with delays or remained unimplemented. All managers must renew their commitment to complying with those recommendations in order to accelerate the implementation of the ICT strategy.

82. The Group took note of the finalization of internal policies and procedures for formalizing designation and delegation of authority in the area of ICT. To ensure the strategy's successful implementation, efforts must be made to strengthen coordination and harmonization, particularly in peacekeeping and special political missions; improve information security with a view to preventing potential security risks; and enhance procurement. The Group looked forward to learning more about the projected expenditures related to those activities, as well as the share of annual Umoja maintenance costs managed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology. It would also be interested to learn more about procurement and management of ICT services, particularly at the local and regional levels, and steps taken to improve the ratio of contracts managed at those levels.

83. The Group would seek further clarification with regard to the steps envisaged by the Secretariat to meet the growing demand for ICT services, as well as an assessment of further investments needed, inter alia, to support the use of videoconferencing services. It also looked forward to examining detailed proposals for an effective and coherent application development strategy designed to eliminate redundant and obsolete applications and reduce fragmentation. Lastly, the Group encouraged the Secretary-General to strengthen capacity-building programmes for staff members, using in-house capacity, and to provide peacekeeping missions with the ICT tools needed to implement their mandates.

84. **Ms. Grant** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that ICT played a key role in facilitating the Organization's work by strengthening communication; improving the responsiveness of its global workforce; and promoting efficient sharing of accurate information to support decision-making and enhance oversight and accountability.

85. The European Union welcomed the progress made in implementing the ICT strategy, including the work done to consolidate fragmented systems; improve

service delivery by delegating competencies; rationalize applications and ICT centres; strengthen governance; and support the implementation of Umoja. Her delegation also welcomed the enhanced coordination between the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Field Support, and the clarity provided by the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2016/11) with regard to the allocation of responsibilities for ICT.

86. A number of challenges must be tackled to ensure the successful implementation of the ICT strategy. Robust policies aimed at strengthening governance and focusing investment on service delivery, particularly in the area of cybersecurity, would be essential for optimizing resource utilization and capitalizing on the value of ICT assets and investments. The continued leadership of managers across all Secretariat entities would be critical in that regard. In addition, further progress could be made to enhance oversight over procurement, management of assets and human resources for ICT to avoid duplication and ensure the efficient, flexible and transparent use of resources throughout the Organization.

87. **Ms. Baumann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that Member States had adopted the ICT strategy with the aim of reducing fragmentation in the ICT environment; strengthening central leadership of ICT systems; establishing effective governance; improving information security; and increasing transparency. As a result of the progress achieved, the ICT infrastructure and architecture were running more smoothly; improvements were being made to operations and service delivery; new ICT policies were in place; critical support had been provided for the deployment of Umoja; systems were more secure; and the enterprise application help desk had been fully established. She particularly welcomed the efforts made to improve collaboration between peacekeeping and non-peacekeeping entities on ICT matters.

88. In addressing remaining challenges, the Secretary-General must foster deeper coordination and collaboration within the Organization and ensure the full support and commitment of senior management. The two delegations also shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General should continue to reduce the level of fragmentation in the ICT environment across the Secretariat and at all duty stations and field missions and to strengthen inter-department collaboration. Efforts should be made to mainstream Umoja within the overall ICT strategy and architecture, in particular by establishing a unified system for Umoja support, including in peacekeeping entities, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A. Lastly, she urged Member States to encourage the harmonization and sharing of ICT services with other United Nations entities, in particular at field locations, in line with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 69/262.

89. **Mr. Wax** (Israel) said that Israel supported the ICT strategy, which would assist the Organization in its efforts to keep apace of ongoing technological developments, achieve administrative and financial efficiencies, and fulfil its mandates.

90. Implementing the strategy effectively would require more than simply incorporating new technology and understanding the need for innovation. Such technology must be applied and utilized correctly, which would entail providing adequate training and maintaining dedicated ICT personnel to harness the full potential of advanced systems. In that regard, trainers must have the necessary skill set to provide United Nations staff with the guidance they required to operate new systems. Digital solutions would also allow off-site personnel to have access to information in the field, thereby enhancing their mobility. In that connection, he welcomed the examples of innovative applications of ICT provided in the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/400).

91. Senior management must ensure that new systems were utilized optimally in order to achieve the efficiencies and cost reductions envisaged under the ICT strategy. In that regard, the Organization must complete the transition from a localized to a cloud-based approach to ICT management in order to reduce duplication of work, while bearing in mind the need to enhance cybersecurity preparedness to safeguard its information and provide a secure working environment.

92. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that all Secretariat departments should comply fully with the ICT strategy, working together with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to eliminate duplicate systems. While it was important to assess whether the strategy was being applied in an appropriate manner, Member States must avoid inadvertently blocking vital ICT reforms needed to implement new strategies and fulfil mandates.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*

United Nations A/C.5/71/SR.25

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 25th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 8 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Mr. Pretterhofer (Vice-Chair) ..... (Austria)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

## Contents

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*)

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17-03786 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals**
(*continued*) (A/71/753 and A/71/812)

1. **Mr. Elias** (Registrar of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch (A/71/753), said that the construction project had started in January 2012 on land donated by the host State, the United Republic of Tanzania. The work had been substantially completed on 1 December 2016 and staff had moved in on 5 December 2016. The project had maintained an excellent safety and environmental record and had remained within budget, with unused funds of approximately $455,000, or 43 per cent of the contingency provision, to be returned to the Member States on completion.

2. The lessons learned from other United Nations projects had been applied and local design elements, materials and labour had been used. The support of the host State, the technical guidance of the Office of Central Support Services, the Office of Legal Affairs and other Secretariat departments, the efforts of Mechanism staff with the assistance of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 and the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, and the leadership of the project owner from the initial planning to the completion of construction had been essential. As Registrar, he would assume the responsibilities of the project owner to ensure that the post-construction activities were successful. In 2017, the project team would manage the defect liability period and ensure that any required remedial work was completed expeditiously. After the closure of the project account, scheduled for the end of 2017, unused funds would be returned to the Member States.

3. The efforts of the United Nations had resulted in the timely conclusion of the pre-construction activities, and, with the cooperation of the architects and the contractor, occupancy had been achieved a few months earlier than originally projected. However, the timeline set out in the Secretary-General's previous report (A/70/698) had not been respected because of a topographical error at the start of construction and the delayed delivery of the curtain wall. He was committed to recovering direct and indirect costs arising from delays and errors attributable to the architects and contractor, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/258. In the post-construction phase, the United Nations would invoke all remedies available to recover costs arising from construction delays beyond the contractual deadline. Doing so earlier, when efforts were focused on expeditiously completing the construction, could have been disruptive. The Mechanism and the Office of Central Support Services would continue to collaborate to ensure that technical guidance, recommendations and lessons learned from other capital projects were applied.

4. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/812), said that the Advisory Committee looked forward to the full completion of the project within the 12-month post-occupancy phase, which had begun on 1 December 2016. The repairs in the punch list developed by the project team should be addressed in a timely manner and related cost implications for the Organization should be avoided as far as possible. At the end of 2016, the total expenditure had amounted to $8.3 million, with projected expenditure in 2017 of $1.0 million. The United Nations should not be responsible for paying direct or indirect costs resulting from the delays in the project, which had reduced the estimated savings, or from damages. An assessment was being conducted with a view to attributing that responsibility. The Advisory Committee looked forward to the finalization of the third and final audit by the Office for Internal Oversight Services, which would cover post-construction activities. Unused contingency funds should be returned to Member States at the conclusion of the project. Since certain matters were outstanding, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit a final progress report at the Assembly's seventy-second session.

5. **Mr. Viera** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group welcomed the substantial completion of the construction of the facility, which had been fully operational and occupied by the Mechanism since December 2016. The Group expressed its appreciation for the support of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the

project, the Tribunal and the Mechanism. The Secretary-General should ensure that cooperation between the United Nations and stakeholders continued in the post-occupancy phase. The Group would seek further information regarding the project delays, their direct and indirect costs, and the recovery of those costs through contractual remedies. The defect and liability phase should be completed within the projected timeline at no further cost to the United Nations.

6. With regard to the governance and oversight of the project, the Group looked forward to receiving updates on the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the audit of the post-construction phase. The Mechanism should share the lessons learned from the construction and discuss the establishment of synergies and efficiencies with the other international organizations and judicial institutions that were expected to move to the vicinity of the facility.

7. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the fact that the project had remained within budget, that no safety, ethical or environmental risks had materialized, and that the buildings and public areas had been made wheelchair-accessible, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Local knowledge, capacity and materials had been used and the facility was energy efficient. Savings had been made by reusing furniture from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The Group would seek clarification regarding the delays in implementation, which had affected expenditure, and would follow up on the possibility of accommodating the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone on the premises.

8. **Mr. Ngei Rogoa** (Kenya) said that his delegation appreciated the contribution of the Office of Central Support Services to the project and trusted that the Secretary-General would announce efforts to provide appropriate accommodation, including buildings and facilities, at other duty stations. The project had been completed as a result of effective governance and oversight and strong teams on the ground. The lessons learned and best practices should be applied in ongoing and future construction projects.

*The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.*

United Nations A/C.5/71/SR.26

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 26th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 9 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
*Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Sene

## Contents

Agenda item 133: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

*Accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat*

*Procurement activities in the United Nations Secretariat*

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

*Managing after-service health insurance*

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17-03907 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 133: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations** (*continued*)

*Accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat* (A/71/729, A/71/731, A/71/731/Add.1 and A/71/820)

1. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management), introducing the Secretary-General's sixth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat (A/71/729), said that properly designed and functioning internal controls reduced the likelihood that errors, misconduct or wrongdoing would occur or remain undetected. The report described the progress made in strengthening critical components of the accountability system in 2016 and explained how the increased visibility of the Organization's transactions provided by the Umoja enterprise resource planning system and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) was strengthening management and accountability.

2. Progress had been made in implementing enterprise risk management in the six critical risk areas of organizational structure and synchronization; organizational transformation; strategic planning and budget allocation; safety and security; extrabudgetary funding and management; and human resources strategy. The six working groups established to address those areas were monitoring the work of risk treatment teams, the effectiveness of agreed actions in mitigating risks, and the evolving risk profile of the Organization, and were reporting regularly to the Management Committee. In addition, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support had completed the first phase of the implementation of enterprise risk management in peacekeeping operations, with three missions and the United Nations Global Service Centre having initiated risk treatment plans. The Secretariat had developed a practical guide for managers that included tools and templates for implementing enterprise risk management at the departmental level on the basis of a common methodology. It was also developing an e-learning course for staff at large that would be administered through Inspira and the United Nations System Staff College.

3 The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat, established in September 2016, included definitions of fraud and corruption as they applied to the Secretariat; reiterated the Organization's policy of zero tolerance for fraudulent acts; described the responsibilities of staff members with respect to preventing fraud and corruption; set out fraud prevention measures; and outlined the principles guiding third parties in contractual arrangements with the Secretariat. Efforts had been made to raise awareness of the Framework through a number of platforms, including iSeek, and a Leadership Dialogue on the topic of fraud awareness and prevention administered by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Ethics Office. An e-learning programme on anti-fraud efforts was also being developed by the Ethics Office, in conjunction with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Office of Human Resources Management. Moreover, the Secretariat was undertaking an enterprise-wide fraud risk assessment, which would contribute to the assurance process underpinning internal controls. The High-level Committee on Management had created a task force for the purpose of establishing a single agreed definition of fraud and suspected or presumptive fraud across the United Nations system and developing a common understanding with regard to partnership arrangements with implementing partners. In addition, a new policy against retaliation for reporting misconduct, which covered preventive action and misconduct committed by non-staff personnel, had been finalized in January 2017.

4. The Secretariat was currently developing a statement on internal control whereby programme managers would be requested to verify, at the beginning of each financial period, the effectiveness of the internal controls for which they were responsible. As a first step towards introducing the statement, an Assurance and Monitoring Unit has been created in the Accounts Division of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts with the aim of providing reasonable assurance of the reliability of data flowing into financial statements and records.

5. With regard to accountability in field operations, directors and chiefs of mission support, as chief fiduciaries of peacekeeping operations, were required to submit letters of representation stating that they had properly exercised the authority delegated to them. In addition, a mechanism that allowed personnel to be vetted for prior misconduct against information recorded in the Misconduct Tracking System maintained by the Department of Field Support had been implemented in peacekeeping missions, in order to ensure that personnel previously found to have committed misconduct did not serve again at the United Nations. The Secretary-General attached high

importance to preventing and responding to all forms of misconduct, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse. Peacekeeping and special political missions were implementing the programme of action set out in the 2014 report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779), and the latest report on that subject (A/71/818) had recently been issued.

6. By significantly increasing the visibility of data in the areas of finance, human resources, real estate and procurement, Umoja had contributed to enhancing transparency, management and decision-making. It provided real-time information on budget implementation and fund availability across entities and funding sources, and served as a central repository of all extrabudgetary contribution agreements. It had also strengthened compliance with donor agreements and improved tracking of the performance of implementing partners. In addition, Umoja provided a consolidated source of operational information relating to human resources and a database of global commercial suppliers to support the implementation of a global procurement policy. The Umoja real estate module also afforded a comprehensive view of the owned, leased and donated right-to-use real estate holdings across all duty stations and field missions.

7. The performance evaluation systems established by the Secretariat consisted of the senior managers' compacts for Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and heads and deputy heads of missions, and the performance management system for all other staff. In 2016, the compact for heads and deputy heads of missions had been refined to include an objective on gender mainstreaming; stronger language on conduct and discipline; and a new commitment in the area of environmental planning. In addition, ongoing improvements were being made to the performance management system, as reported by the Secretary-General in his overview report on human resources management reform (A/71/323).

8. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/820), noted the progress made in establishing structures and systems which, if utilized in the manner intended, could provide management and governing bodies with elements for a viable accountability framework. The Advisory Committee welcomed the adoption of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework and the revised whistle-blower protection policy. It also welcomed the steps taken towards ensuring swifter monitoring of the status of implementation of General Assembly resolutions on administrative and budgetary matters.

9. With regard to institutional performance, the Advisory Committee noted with concern that the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/729) contained no information on the implementation of results-based management and few specific details concerning the impact of Umoja on accountability. With respect to individual performance, it recommended that additional efforts should be made to strengthen senior managers' compacts by making them more concrete, with specific measurable and time-bound performance indicators and targets. Moreover, as the current distribution of performance ratings might not accurately reflect the performance of staff, the Advisory Committee expected that specific measures would be enacted to ensure a more credible distribution of ratings.

10. In view of the persistent gaps in institutional and personal accountability, the Advisory Committee was not convinced that a progress report on the accountability system should be issued biennially. However, elements of the accountability framework relating to human resources should be considered in the context of, or at the same time as, the Secretary-General's proposal on the evolving human resources management framework, to be submitted for the General Assembly's consideration at its seventy-third session.

11. **Mr. Achamkulangare** (Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on fraud prevention, detection and response in United Nations system organizations (A/71/731), said that the report addressed concerns expressed by Member States and internal and external oversight bodies regarding the status of anti-fraud efforts in the United Nations system. It examined fraud prevention, detection and response in the Organization at the conceptual and operational levels, and set out a fraud management framework for adoption by United Nations system organizations. The report contained 16 formal recommendations, 1 addressed to legislative and governing bodies and 15 addressed to executive heads. It also contained 20 informal recommendations in the form of suggestions for improving policies and practices for addressing fraud.

12. The average level of fraud reported by the United Nations system concerned approximately 0.03 per cent of total revenue, compared with an average of between 1 and 5 per cent for the public and private sectors, which suggested that underreporting or non-detection

in the system could be significant. In addition to causing financial losses, fraud had damaging effects on an organization's reputation, potentially undermining its ability to implement programmes effectively, establish partnerships and secure funding. Fraud prevention, detection and response mechanisms thus played a key role in enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of the United Nations system and in promoting appropriate oversight and the responsible use of resources.

13. While a number of organizations had been making concerted efforts in recent years to strengthen their anti-fraud policies and strategies, more needed to be done to improve the understanding of the threat of fraud and methods of tackling fraudulent activities and malfeasance in the United Nations system. Some organizations were unable or unwilling to properly acknowledge and address that threat, as reflected in the comments they had provided on the draft report (A/71/731). The management of such organizations must seriously examine their fraud risk profiles, acknowledge their level of exposure to fraud, and devise an effective anti-fraud programme to protect their assets, integrity and reputation. There was considerable variation in the approaches and intensity of efforts undertaken to manage fraud in different organizations, as well as in the nature of fraudulent activities and levels of fraud committed by staff members and external parties. Consequently, instead of advocating a one-size-fits-all approach, the report stressed the need to adapt the proposed fraud management framework to the specific requirements of each organization.

14. Rather than establishing new structures with significant financial implications, organizations must utilize existing structures more effectively and apply the principle of proportionality in addressing fraud on the basis of assessed risk. Moreover, establishing robust fraud prevention measures from the outset would be less costly than responding to acts of fraud after they occurred.

15. The fraud management framework set out in the report emphasized the need for organizations to establish clear definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud. The lack of a common understanding of those concepts, even within the same organization, gave rise to ambiguities of interpretation and could jeopardize the effective implementation of anti-fraud measures. Such ambiguity also undermined the accuracy of financial reporting, transparency, and the compatibility and comparability of fraud data across United Nations system organizations.

16. Managers were ultimately responsible for creating a strong anti-fraud culture within their respective organizations; nevertheless, many respondents to a system-wide survey on fraud conducted by JIU had indicated that they did not perceive a clear commitment on the part of senior management to tackling fraud. Executive heads must therefore set a strong "tone at the top" by reiterating their unequivocal commitment to preventing, detecting and responding to fraud. In addition, anti-fraud policies and procedures were often fragmented across several rules, regulations, guidelines, policies and administrative structures. Even in organizations that had stand-alone corporate anti-fraud policies, the allocation of roles and responsibilities for addressing fraud was unclear and there was no specific guidance on how to operationalize such policies. United Nations system organizations must therefore assess the effectiveness of their existing accountability and control frameworks in countering fraud and update them to incorporate organization-wide anti-fraud controls.

17. Targeted training for staff was also essential. While most organizations offered mandatory ethics training, very few provided dedicated anti-fraud training, particularly for staff in risk-prone functional areas such as procurement, and none had provided evidence of the existence of an anti-fraud training strategy aimed at raising awareness and addressing capacity and knowledge deficits among staff and management with regard to fraud-related issues.

18. The fact that most United Nations system organizations did not conduct systematic fraud risk assessments or consider fraud to be a corporate risk indicated a general lack of understanding of the impact of fraud on an organization's operations. Such risk assessments must be conducted in order to systematically identify where and how fraud occurred; devise controls to mitigate fraud-related risks; and develop anti-fraud strategies in proportion to assessed levels of risk.

19. Organizations must exercise due diligence in screening potential staff members or third parties, such as implementing partners, vendors and contractors, for indications of potential or previous fraudulent behaviour. Taking such precautions prior to the recruitment of a candidate or formalization of a partnership was more cost-effective than addressing the consequences of fraudulent acts, including financial losses and lengthy and costly legal and administrative processes. In that connection, organizations should consider incorporating standard anti-fraud provisions in legal agreements with third

parties to protect the interests of the United Nations system. Monitoring of high-risk programmes and activities, particularly in the form of spot checks, reviews and audits, must also be strengthened, and fraud prevention and detection capabilities such as automated activity reporting and data mining should be integrated in organizations' automation and enterprise resource planning systems.

20. Whistle-blowers were responsible for the detection of more instances of fraud and corruption than all other methods combined. While most organizations had adopted at least basic provisions governing whistle-blowing, instructions on hotlines and other fraud reporting mechanisms were fragmented and not easily accessible. In addition, the fact that many respondents to the JIU survey had indicated that they would fear retaliation if they reported suspected fraud demonstrated the need to strengthen whistle-blower protection policies and procedures in the United Nations system.

21. It would be critical to address the challenges contributing to the lengthy investigation processes and delays in determining and imposing disciplinary and other corrective action for perpetrators of fraud. The protracted nature of those processes created a sense of impunity within organizations that prevented fraud from being deterred and reported. In addition, an effective sanctions regime providing for disciplinary measures for staff and debarment for external parties should be established. While policies prescribing disciplinary measures were in place, most organizations weighed the legal risks heavily in determining whether and what kind of disciplinary measures to impose and whether to refer cases to national law enforcement authorities for prosecution. Organizations should review the practices of other multilateral institutions with regard to such referrals when determining the appropriate course of action in such cases.

22. Basic information on fraud was either absent or fragmented in all of the organizations reviewed, which undermined accountability and decision-making. In particular, there was little, if any, information on the implementation of anti-fraud measures in relation to specific performance indicators. There was also a lack of credible fraud statistics and information on level of fraud exposure; status of compliance with anti-fraud policies; sanctions; fraud-related losses and recovery of assets; and lessons learned.

23. Enhanced cooperation and coordination among organizations were critical for addressing fraud on a comprehensive, system-wide basis. Indeed, there had been a number of reported cases in which several organizations had been defrauded by the same third parties. In that regard, organizations could collaborate by sharing information on vendors and implementing partners; conducting joint anti-fraud campaigns; sharing training material; performing joint or parallel investigations; and harmonizing prescribed sanctions for staff and third parties.

24. He drew attention to the four annexes to the report (A/71/731), which had been published in full on the JIU website. While the feedback of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) was welcome, a number of its comments on the report seemed excessively defensive. He hoped that United Nations system organizations would draw on the findings and recommendations of JIU to enact critical anti-fraud reform.

25. **Mr. Herman** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of CEB on the JIU report (A/70/731/Add.1), said that United Nations system organizations considered that the report contributed to strengthening system-wide transparency and anti-fraud measures, particularly in the light of the significant risk posed by fraud. In their comments on the report, organizations unequivocally acknowledged the responsibility of all personnel to apply anti-fraud measures; universally supported vigorously pursuing all allegations of fraud; agreed on the need to protect whistle-blowers; and noted the importance of supporting oversight bodies in their efforts to combat fraud and corruption.

26. Several organizations had emphasized the significant impact of the resources required to implement the Unit's recommendations on smaller entities which, by virtue of their size, often faced fewer fraud-related allegations. Organizations nevertheless generally accepted the Unit's recommendations, particularly on the need to adopt common definitions regarding fraudulent and corrupt practices; bring anti-fraud policies in line with best practices and develop comprehensive, organization-specific anti-fraud strategies for their implementation; and establish anti-fraud training. Differing views had been expressed with regard to the details of implementing some recommendations, and alternative approaches had been proposed in some cases. Organizations had also noted that the implementation of many of the recommendations could depend on the outcome of recommendation 5, which called for all entities to conduct a corporate fraud risk assessment. Such an assessment would allow each entity to determine the

costs and benefits of implementing the Unit's recommendations within its specific context.

27. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, recalled the obligation of senior managers and heads of department within the Secretariat to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them and to be responsible for honouring their commitments, with a view to fulfilling the Organization's mandates in a timely and cost-effective manner, in accordance with the definition of accountability set out in General Assembly resolution 64/259.

28. The Group took note of the adoption of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat and the updated policy on protection against retaliation. She was interested to learn more about the practical measures that the Secretary-General would take to strengthen the contribution to the accountability framework of transformational projects such as IPSAS, Umoja, the global field support strategy, the mobility policy and the capital master plan, in line with the relevant recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

29. The Group was concerned by the low rate of implementation of the oversight bodies' recommendations relating to accountability and would seek to learn more about the challenges faced by the Secretary-General in that regard, with a view to strengthening implementation efforts. In particular, it noted with regret the lack of references in the Secretary-General's report (A/71/729) to the Board of Auditors' findings and recommendations on personal and institutional accountability, as well as the decline in the implementation rate of the recommendations of OIOS. External and internal oversight mechanisms played an indispensable role in performing regular audit reviews and issuing recommendations, which often highlighted operational deficiencies. Such mechanisms also strengthened the performance of managers by monitoring the activities for which they were accountable.

30. The Group would seek further information on efforts made to develop a single set of definitions of fraud across the United Nations system; develop a central intake mechanism for investigating allegations of fraud; and establish the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework. It also looked forward to learning more about steps taken to establish a single system-wide tracking system for all forms of misconduct; monitor the status of implementation of General Assembly resolutions on budgetary and administrative matters; and develop a results-based management plan.

31. Implementation of an effective accountability framework was an ongoing exercise aimed at strengthening the culture of accountability and improving the management of financial and human resources in the Organization. An annual progress report to the General Assembly on the matter was therefore necessary.

32. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, welcomed the progress made in strengthening monitoring and oversight mechanisms and managing risk and performance. External and internal oversight bodies provided reasonable assurance that resources were being utilized effectively, assets were being safeguarded, and financial information was being reported reliably in compliance with regulations, rules and policies that promoted accountability and strong management. The observations and recommendations of such bodies, particularly with regard to completed and ongoing transformational projects, were greatly beneficial to the Secretariat. The Group commended the actions taken to strengthen enterprise risk management; establish the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework; introduce the statement on internal control; enhance internal controls in the procurement process; strengthen accountability at peacekeeping missions; improve ethical standards; and enhance the performance of personnel. It also commended the exemplary work of JIU in highlighting areas of strength and weakness in the anti-fraud efforts of the United Nations system and called on organizations to implement its recommendations in order to combat fraud more effectively.

33. The Secretary-General should continue to capitalize on the role of Umoja in increasing the availability of financial information for the management of common support services in such areas as budget and finance, including in the context of peacekeeping operations. The Group would examine the role of the HR Insight accountability and monitoring framework in helping managers achieve their human resources management objectives in relation to, inter alia, the five strategic indicators related to gender equality, geographical representation, vacancy rates, staffing timeline and performance management compliance included in the human resources management scorecard. It would also examine how the Umoja functionalities relating to central support services could contribute to strengthening accountability. In addition, the Group concurred with the Advisory Committee on the need

for practical measures to ensure that the elements of the accountability system led to improved personal and institutional accountability.

34. The Group called for concrete measures to develop capacity for evaluation within Secretariat programmes, with support provided by OIOS and external oversight bodies, and stressed the need to implement the enterprise risk management framework across all peacekeeping operations. It welcomed the initiative to vet military and police contingent personnel, including all personnel deployed at peacekeeping and special political missions, in order to ensure that personnel previously found to have committed misconduct did not serve again at the United Nations. Lastly, it looked forward to the development of a single system-wide tracking system that would cover all forms of misconduct.

35. **Ms. Baumann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that the implementation of the accountability framework, which required the unwavering commitment of staff and senior leadership alike, was essential for ensuring that the management of the United Nations was predictable, credible, effective and efficient. She therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard.

36. The General Assembly had repeatedly acknowledged the importance of results-based management for ensuring a more accountable, effective and efficient United Nations, as reflected in its resolutions 67/253 and 70/255. In particular, in paragraph 12 of its resolution 70/255, the Assembly had reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to include in his sixth progress report on the accountability system a detailed plan, with a fixed time frame and clear milestones, for the implementation of results-based management as part of the regular functioning of the Organization. She thus shared the Advisory Committee's concern that the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/729) did not address the requirements set out by the General Assembly in that regard. The Secretary-General should also intensify his efforts in the area of results-based budgeting, where progress remained modest even though Member States had first adopted a resolution on the matter some 16 years earlier.

37. The two delegations were encouraged that the Secretary-General, in his remarks to the General Assembly on taking the oath of office, had highlighted the importance of management reform and the need to foster a culture of accountability by establishing effective and independent evaluation mechanisms, strong performance management and protection for whistle-blowers.

38. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, welcomed the general information provided in the report of the Secretary-General on efforts made to implement the accountability framework. His delegation nevertheless regretted the emphasis placed on process-focused initiatives rather than on the results and impact of the activities undertaken, in spite of the request contained in General Assembly resolution 70/255 for the Secretary-General to take a more strategic approach to implementing the accountability framework and to include in the related progress reports comprehensive and tangible assessments of progress made by the Secretariat.

39. While welcoming the progress made in establishing structures and systems that contributed to a sound accountability framework, the European Union agreed with the Advisory Committee on the need for practical measures to ensure enforceable institutional and personal accountability. Indeed, the Organization's ability to operationalize and enforce remedial measures for staff and officials who had not adequately exercised their responsibilities was central to the credibility of the accountability framework, as was the effective use of resources, which directly affected mandate fulfilment. Although much of the remaining work would be process-focused, a cultural shift was also needed to improve accountability, which could be effected by senior managers within their existing capacities without changes to processes or procedures.

40. The European Union welcomed the adoption of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat and looked forward to receiving updates on its implementation. It also looked forward to more concrete information on the added value generated by the enterprise risk management framework. Holding senior managers accountable for the delivery of results, not just outputs, remained a work in progress, with more needing to be done to promote and mainstream a real culture of accountability. In that regard, his delegation was disappointed that the Secretary-General had failed to present a plan for the implementation of results-based management, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/255.

41. The States members of the European Union stood ready to discuss the future reporting frequency and content of the progress report on the accountability system. In that context, more attention should be devoted to the human resources management framework and to issues relating to the reports of oversight bodies, particularly the status of implementation of the Board of Auditors' recommendations and efforts to ensure accountability for addressing audit recommendations.

42. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that the thorough implementation of the accountability framework, which must incorporate robust enterprise risk management, anti-fraud and anti-corruption controls and results-based management, could strengthen the Organization's ability to manage risk and ensure alignment between authority and responsibility. In that regard, she commended the Secretary-General for finalizing the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework and stressed the need for Member States to ensure its effective implementation in order to combat fraud across the Secretariat, with a particular focus on implementing partners.

43. Her delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's prompt attention in finalizing the updated policy on protection against retaliation, which would help to foster an environment in which staff reporting fraud and misconduct were protected. She looked forward to further refinement of the policy following the six-month review of its implementation. She also noted with appreciation the completion of the first phase of implementation of the enterprise risk management framework across peacekeeping missions, including the efforts undertaken by three missions to address previously identified risks. She nevertheless agreed with the Advisory Committee on the need for a more comprehensive approach to implementing the framework across all peacekeeping missions and looked forward to learning more about how the Secretariat planned to achieve that goal.

44. The United States supported the implementation of results-based management, which would require a shift towards an organizational culture that emphasized setting specific, measurable and time-bound goals. Her delegation would therefore seek further information from the Department of Management on why the Secretary-General's report (A/71/729) had failed to respond to Member States' request for a detailed plan in that regard.

45. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management) said that the Secretariat was making encouraging progress in implementing enterprise risk management and establishing common definitions of fraud and corruption across the United Nations system through the working group established by the High-level Committee on Management to address fraud. Those initiatives reflected the commitment of the Secretary-General to improving the accountability framework.

46. A cultural change was needed to shift the focus of Member States and the Secretariat away from inputs towards outputs in the context of strengthening accountability. With regard to the role of major transformational projects in fostering accountability, each project had a responsibility structure that clearly emphasized the individual accountability of each contributor, and progress and challenges in implementation were being monitored with scorecards established by the Secretary-General.

47. The lack of a strategic focus in the Secretary-General's report (A/71/729) could be attributed to the current annual reporting cycle, which meant that the Secretariat was only able to assess developments over a period of six to seven months, shorter than the time frame required to develop meaningful strategic analysis. The foundations had been laid for the implementation of results-based management, which required establishing a strategic framework of expected results and performance indicators; developing and monitoring programme budgets across all budget categories; and evaluating outcomes, taking into account the recommendations of oversight bodies. While he would make every effort to respond to Member States' concerns in that regard during informal consultations, the Secretariat would be in a better position to report on the implementation of results-based management after the expected completion of Umoja Extension 2 in 2018. In that connection, the Secretary-General attached high priority to the recommendations of the oversight bodies, and the Management Committee was meeting regularly to review their implementation status. Obstacles in that regard included the highly general nature of certain recommendations, which made them difficult to implement in full, and the specific challenges faced at hardship duty stations.

*Procurement activities in the United Nations Secretariat* (A/70/676, A/70/676/Add.1, A/71/681 and A/71/823)

48. **Mr. Cutts** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), introducing the Secretary-General's report on procurement activities in the United Nations Secretariat (A/71/681), said that in the report, the Secretary-General requested the Assembly

to note the impact of Umoja on procurement, the advantages and disadvantages of different solicitation methods in the acquisition of aviation services, an assessment of the pilot project for electronic tendering, an update on the development of the Award Review Board and the Vendor Review Committee, efforts to promote procurement from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and an update on regional procurement. The procurement volume for the United Nations system had increased from $16.1 billion in 2013 to $17.6 billion in 2015. The procurement volume for the Secretariat, which accounted for between 18 and 19 per cent of the total, had increased from $3.0 billion in 2013 to $3.1 billion in 2015, and was initially estimated at $3.2 billion in 2016.

49. The Procurement Division in the Office of Central Support Services was essential in the acquisition of goods and services at Headquarters, and its role in the supply chain for peacekeeping and special political missions, offices away from Headquarters, tribunals and regional commissions should be strengthened. His Office and the Department of Field Support would work together to ensure that the supply chain management strategy met the needs of the Department and the operational requirements of the Secretariat. While efficiency and agility were essential to such management, the strategy must also provide strong governance and ensure that such core principles as the segregation of procurement duties, necessary in protecting the Organization from fraud and corruption, were respected. His Office's commitment to professionalism and integrity went beyond working under the scrutiny of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit. At the beginning of 2016, the coverage of the Award Review Board had been expanded to include the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna. The Division offered training to procurement, requisitioning and contract management offices and promoted ethical standards internally and among vendors.

50. The implementation of Umoja had removed location-based operational barriers, harmonized processes and enabled real-time management of procurement regardless of location. The strategic direction of procurement in the Secretariat would be aligned with the global service delivery model to realize the benefits of Umoja and other reforms. In consultation with stakeholders, his Office was reviewing adjustments to the governance, organization and distribution of procurement offices worldwide to ensure that clients' needs were met as efficiently as possible.

51. United Nations procurement should be reorganized on the basis of regional hubs with the flexibility to meet broader demands, and resources should be aligned with workloads. The procurement governance adjustments at the United Nations Office at Nairobi were a step in that direction and an early indicator of the potential benefits of consolidation. To help align processes, procurement and financial transactions of the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would be made through Umoja. The thresholds for the delegation of procurement authority had been increased, the vetting of cases by the local committee on contracts had been reduced and processes had been simplified. The Nairobi model, which had improved client satisfaction and service delivery, could be replicated in Geneva and Vienna.

52. Procurement offices in Geneva and in the Global Service Centre at Brindisi, Italy, and selected units at Headquarters in New York had joined the e-tendering pilot project initiated by the Procurement Division in 2014 with the solicitation of a number of requests for quotations. The results of outreach activities and surveys had indicated that vendors had reacted positively to the system. In future, e-tendering would also be used for invitations to bid and requests for proposals and would be rolled out to other units of the Division. The Organization gave a high priority to ensuring that vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition had access to business opportunities. The number of registered vendors and the amount spent on goods and services from non-industrialized countries had increased in recent years because of the introduction of basic-level registrations and the support provided to vendors by the Regional Procurement Office. To align procurement practices with industry standards, the Secretariat was introducing a new solicitation method for the procurement of long-term aviation services and had included after-sales support in vehicle contracts. The Procurement Division and the Department of Field Support had held technology fairs to introduce officials to new products and concepts that could be used to meet field requirements.

53. One of the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was to promote public procurement practices that were sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities. The Secretariat was therefore reviewing efforts to reduce its environmental impact by using more energy-efficient

infrastructure and transport, more renewable energy and better waste management systems. The Secretariat would submit to the General Assembly at the current session an action plan to ensure that by 2020 United Nations operations and facilities did not, within current procurement rules, negatively affect the climate.

54. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/823), said that the Advisory Committee looked forward to the outcome of the review by the Office of Central Support Services of the governance, organization and distribution of procurement offices worldwide. The Secretary-General should maximize efficiency while taking into account the procurement needs of individual entities. Any procurement service delivery proposals should be coordinated with such ongoing initiatives as the supply chain management system. Further explanation regarding the imbalance in the distribution of resources referred to in the Secretary-General's report and clarification regarding the underlying analysis and the method used for estimating procurement workloads were needed. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide in his next report an update on the changes in procurement processes in Nairobi and the feasibility of replicating them in Geneva and Vienna.

55. In his report, the Secretary-General provided only preliminary information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the request-for-proposal method in the procurement of long-term aviation services; the Advisory Committee trusted that he would provide further details when its report was considered by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to ensure that the Procurement Division was involved from the early stages of the launch and planning of new missions in order to maximize efficiency and optimize the use of resources, and to provide in his next report further information regarding standing administrative measures finalized in the area of procurement, the circumstances in which they were used and the ways in which their use was reported.

56. The Advisory Committee welcomed the development of a joint shipping cell with the World Food Programme, the inclusion of procurement in the young professionals programme and the progress made as a result of the implementation of Umoja, including the elimination of legacy systems, the migration of vendor information to a single database for the Secretariat and the publication of awards over $40,000 on the Procurement Division website. The Secretary-General should make better use of the data in Umoja to improve visibility, transparency, practices and operations in procurement.

57. **Mr. Achamkulangare** (Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of JIU on contract management and administration in the United Nations system (A/70/676), said that in the report the Unit analysed the management by United Nations system organizations of contracts for goods and services after award, with a view to identifying good practices, lessons learned and areas for improvement and enhancing system-wide coherence. The report focused on contract management governance, human resources and capacity-building, performance monitoring, contract change management, automation support, and harmonization and collaboration among organizations. In preparing the report, the Unit had developed a model to assess post-award contract management processes. The model had been populated with data received through a survey of United Nations contract management practitioners and senior managers. After the data had been analysed, each organization had been sent an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses in contract management.

58. Given the large volume of procurement, stakeholders must make a concerted effort to address the deficiencies in post-award contract management, which were similar across the system and would recur unless policies and procedures were refined and practices strengthened. Of the 12 recommendations in the report, 2 were addressed to the legislative bodies and the remainder to the executive heads of the organizations. Post-award contract management policies and procedures were in many cases absent, and contract management structures, roles and responsibilities were not defined in a way that promoted accountability and efficiency. Senior management should professionalize contract management and establish contract management units where required. Training in post-award contract management was neglected in most organizations, with the result that staff lacked skills in that area. While risk management plans existed for the pre-award phase, no systematic risk assessment was conducted at the start of the post-award phase. Contract performance monitoring should be improved to avoid poor contractor performance, ensure that services were delivered as expected and prevent payments that exceeded the value of the services received. Contractor performance was not systematically evaluated, the guidance for those responsible for such evaluations

was not clear and most organizations did not have central systems for keeping records of evaluations.

59. JIU welcomed efforts among organizations to share contractor performance information through a central list of decisions concerning the ineligibility of or sanctions against vendors, to help organizations make informed decisions when selecting contractors and minimize the likelihood of a vendor that had performed badly being awarded a contract by another organization. Understanding the reasons for and management of contract modifications was essential to effective contract execution, but none of the organizations had provided aggregate information in that area. Modifications that reflected cost overruns, delays, unjustified extensions and the acceptance of inferior products or services indicated deficiencies that must be addressed by senior management. The lack of documentation in the organizations had made it impossible to quantify or qualify the effects of such deficiencies.

60. Post-award contract management was one of the riskiest areas in procurement. Regardless of the way in which a contract was awarded, the post-award activities determined the extent to which the related objectives were achieved and the performance, timeliness, quality and cost requirements met. The legislative bodies and such entities as the Procurement Network of the CEB High-level Committee on Management must ensure that the required action was taken. Organizations should collaborate to harmonize policies, procedures and guidelines in post-award contract management.

61 **Mr. Herman** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of CEB on the JIU report (A/70/676/Add.1), said that, since effective contract management was a fundamental institutional practice, United Nations system organizations welcomed the JIU report and supported many of the recommendations. The implementation of some of the recommendations, however, was impractical for organizations that conducted procurement on a small scale. Many entities needed to tailor implementation of the recommendations to their specific circumstances, and cost-benefit assessments should be conducted for some recommendations. The written notification of the persons designated to manage contracts after award, called for in recommendation 3, was not always necessary. Other recommendations had the full support of system entities, although implementation could depend on the available resources. Many of the recommendations offered a constructive approach to challenges faced by organizations in managing contracts.

62. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that procurement in the United Nations system had increased, in particular in the Procurement Division, where the volume had reached $3.3 billion in 2015. Since efficiency, transparency and cost-effectiveness were essential in the procurement system, the Secretary-General should strengthen internal controls and oversight, make senior staff more accountable and fulfil the corresponding legislative mandates. Any structural change made to procurement operations in implementation of service delivery proposals must be fully coordinated with the supply chain management system. The Group welcomed the Division's efforts to reach the widest possible audience through business seminars, the United Nations Global Marketplace and United Nations procurement manuals, which would raise awareness of procedural requirements among vendors from developing countries. Vendors, in particular those from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, must receive equal, fair and non-discriminatory access to procurement opportunities in the interests of transparency and efficiency. The Secretary-General should explore innovative ways of promoting procurement from such countries at Headquarters and field offices.

63. With regard to the observations and recommendations of the Board of Auditors (A/71/5 (Vol. I)), the waivers and extensions granted to many vendors ran counter to the spirit of transparency and fair play. The Secretary-General should address the weaknesses identified by the Board and improve the efficiency of the Procurement Division. The Organization should procure goods and services in compliance with established procedures based on international competitive bidding and the widest possible geographical base, and should promote a transparent, impartial and cost-effective procurement system that reflected the international character of the United Nations, as requested in many General Assembly resolutions.

64. The Group requested further information regarding the results achieved in e-tendering, particularly with regard to developing countries. The Secretary-General should report on efforts to reach vendors who could not access the e-tendering system. The concept of environmentally friendly and sustainable procurement had not been approved by the General Assembly and should be studied further, particularly with regard to its possible impact on the

diversification of the origin of vendors and international competition. In addition, resolution 69/273 requested the Secretary-General not to proceed with a sustainable procurement pilot project. The Group would seek further information on that subject in informal consultations. It requested further information regarding the Secretariat's intentions for the Regional Procurement Office in Entebbe, Uganda, given the prospects for a global service delivery model.

65. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that business seminars, online portals and manuals intended to raise awareness regarding procedural requirements in procurement should be available in all languages. Transparency, equal opportunities for vendors from developing countries and streamlined processes were essential in making the United Nations procurement system more efficient. The Secretary-General should promote procurement from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

66. Procurement reporting procedures must be applied in a timely manner and accountability and responsibility in peacekeeping must be improved. The General Assembly had not approved the concept of environmentally friendly and sustainable procurement, and the Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive report on the content of and criteria for such a concept, including its possible impact on the diversification of vendors and on international competition. The Group would seek an update on the ways in which the e-tendering proposal would mitigate the challenges facing vendors in accessing information technology systems for the processing of solicitations. It would request further information regarding the Secretariat's proposal regarding the Regional Procurement Office in Entebbe, given the prospects for a global service delivery model.

67. **Ms. Grant** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Advisory Committee's report had not been made available in all languages until shortly before the meeting; the timely issuance of documents was essential. The Committee's discussions should be guided by the general principles of United Nations procurement: best value for money; fairness, integrity and transparency; effective international competition; and the interest of the Organization. The States members of the European Union welcomed the progress in electronic tendering, the Award Review Board, procurement training and air transport procurement. Request-for-proposal solicitation for air transport services was in line with the general principles of United Nations procurement and had been implemented in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), building on the experience of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), where a pilot request-for-proposal exercise had increased international competition. The Secretariat should expedite the publication of requests for proposals for air transport services.

68. The recommendations of the Board of Auditors should be fully implemented. Procurement processes should take into account new technologies and innovations that enhanced delivery, value for money and sustainability. The roll-out of Umoja had resulted in the establishment of a single vendor roster, the removal of location-based operational barriers and the harmonization of processes. Her delegation looked forward to discussing the ways in which Umoja Extension 2 would further enhance procurement practices and increase visibility and transparency. The Secretariat should promote a global approach to procurement and enhance cooperation among United Nations system entities to reduce the number of location-bound processes and increase system-wide joint procurement, building on the success of the Nairobi pilot project and the World Food Programme joint shipping cell. Procurement initiatives should be aligned with the global service delivery model.

69. The Secretary-General should ensure that all vendors, including those from the country in which a given operation was being conducted, had fair market access to United Nations tenders. The outreach initiatives designed to facilitate participation had increased the geographical diversity of vendors. Her delegation looked forward to receiving information regarding the progress made since 2015 in advertising tenders in all six official languages of the United Nations, which was essential to such diversity. Sustainable procurement was closely linked to the promotion of broad geographical market access, in line with the commitments made by Member States at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris in 2015, and in the 2030 Agenda. United Nations procurement should reflect a sustainable development policy that protected the environment and human rights.

70. **Mr. Munir** (Pakistan) said that given the increase in the volume handled by the Procurement Division, United Nations procurement must be strengthened through increased efficiency, transparency and cost-effectiveness. Strong internal control and oversight, accountability of staff at all levels, and the implementation of the corresponding legislative mandates were essential to efficiency. Although the use of information technology was essential to the efficient processing of solicitations, it should not reduce the chances of successful bidding by Member States. The Secretary-General should promote procurement from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including through awareness-raising business seminars. The results of the Nairobi pilot project should be shared with the General Assembly before the project was replicated in other offices. The Secretary-General should provide the Assembly with an update on the expansion of the coverage of the Award Review Board, the reasons for the rejection of solicitations and the way in which solicitations were processed. The Secretariat should not pre-empt a decision of the Assembly on the concept of environmentally friendly and sustainable procurement, whose implementation in the United Nations system must be refined, taking into account the capabilities of developing countries.

71. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that since over $3 billion was spent annually on procurement, including for peacekeeping and special political missions, the Procurement Division must operate effectively, transparently and in line with industry standards. The Division had made efforts to consolidate processes through the Nairobi pilot project and the joint shipping cell, and should optimize service delivery and consolidate procurement in the Secretariat and among United Nations entities through greater regional procurement and systems contracts. Her delegation would seek further information regarding the phased approach to the consolidation of local offices mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (A/71/729). It was disappointed with the slow transition to a new solicitation method for long-term air charter services. The United Nations should ensure high quality, safety and competition in aviation services, which were the largest commodity procured by the Secretariat and essential to peacekeeping. The Department of Management and the Department of Field Support should jointly address the capability gaps described in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/681).

72. Transparency and accountability were essential in procurement; her delegation welcomed the expansion of the Award Review Board and believed that other areas could be strengthened. The Secretary-General should address the observations of the Board of Auditors on the use of waivers for competitive bidding. A central ineligibility list should be established to minimize the use of bad vendors. The Secretary-General should strengthen internal controls and transparency as procurement service delivery was consolidated through the global service delivery model.

**Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017** (*continued*)

*Managing after-service health insurance*
(A/71/698, A/71/698/Corr.1 and A/71/815)

73. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on managing after-service health insurance (A/71/698 and A/71/698/Corr.1), said that the Secretary-General's report on the matter at the seventieth session of the General Assembly (A/70/590) had contained an overview of health insurance covering officials and former officials, and their family members, across the United Nations system, and recommendations related to efficiency and cost containment, and had been based on the work of the inter-agency Working Group on After-Service Health Insurance established by the Finance and Budget Network of the CEB High-level Committee on Management. The General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to maintain the Working Group and make further proposals to the Assembly at its seventy-first session.

74. The Secretary-General was concerned about the financial pressure that the pay-as-you-go approach would put on future budgets. Disbursements for after-service health insurance were expected to increase from $218 million in the current biennium to $353 million in the biennium 2024-25 and twice that amount by the biennium 2040-41 for entities falling directly within the scope of General Assembly decisions, and from $350 million in the current biennium to $1.4 billion in 2040-41 for all United Nations organizations. Although the after-service health insurance liability for some United Nations system agencies exceeded net assets, full funding of the total liability was unrealistic. The Secretary-General proposed that the obligation related to staff recruited from 1 January 2020 should be fully funded, while the obligations related to staff recruited before that date should continue to be met on a pay-as-you-go basis; they would decline through attrition after an initial period of continued growth. The reserve would be accumulated through a payroll charge starting in the biennium 2020-2021. The charge, currently assessed at

6.17 per cent of salary, would be adjusted to reflect the return on the investment of the reserve over time. The gradual accumulation of the reserve and the return on investments would limit the impact of the pay-as-you-go obligation on future budgets and would balance the obligation and budgetary resources.

75. For the remainder of 2017, the Working Group would focus on collective negotiations with third-party administrators, gathering information regarding the appropriateness of requiring that insured persons should be enrolled for primary coverage under their national health insurance scheme, revisiting plans and eligibility, and achieving critical scale. By the end of 2017, the Task Force on Accounting Standards would complete its work on harmonizing the valuation methodology across the United Nations system. The Working Group on Common Treasury Services would, by the seventy-third session, conclude its exploration of opportunities for inter-agency cooperation in the investment of funds earmarked for the coverage of after-service health insurance liabilities and a permanent body would be established to address insurance matters on an ongoing basis, since after-service health insurance obligations could not be dissociated from cost containment. The Secretary-General's proposal was designed to control the cost of such obligations. The Committee's decision would inform the decisions of the governing bodies of other United Nations system organizations, some of which had endorsed the establishment of reserve funds. While all opportunities to increase efficiency and contain costs would be explored, the establishment of a financial reserve would reduce pressure on future budgets.

76. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/815), said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should endorse recommendations A, B, C, E and G, but not recommendations D and F, of the Secretary-General. It welcomed the promotion by the Working Group on After-Service Health Insurance of cooperation among United Nations system organizations in the management of health insurance plans, negotiations with service providers and the harmonization of after-service health insurance liability valuation methods. In recommendation F, the Secretary-General recommended that the liability related to staff recruited from 1 January 2020 should be fully funded, while the liability related to staff recruited before that date should be funded through the current pay-as-you-go approach. He recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 64/241, had stated that the pay-as-you-go approach remained viable and, by resolution 70/248 B, had endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Organization should continue with it. The current funding proposal was not presented in a comprehensive manner and failed to consider various scenarios and variables that could affect the liability. Information regarding the eligibility of persons insured under the auspices of United Nations system organizations for national health insurance schemes was being gathered, and the Working Group had made no recommendation on the matter. The Advisory Committee looked forward to receiving more information in the Secretary-General's next report.

77. **The Chair** invited a representative of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) to make a statement.

78. **Ms. Saputelli** (Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants) said that FAFICS, which acted on behalf of 59 member associations, was a member of the Working Group on After-Service Health Insurance. Health insurance arrangements varied among the common system organizations but were all based on the principle that retired staff should have access to health insurance if they had been enrolled in staff health insurance schemes for a significant period. Such coverage was essential for the organizations, which hired staff in a competitive market, and was an important condition of service. It was not only a liability of the common system organizations but also a benefit for the staff members of those organizations. Although the matter was included under the agenda item related to the programme budget, it had a significant human resources dimension.

79. The Federation supported all the Working Group's recommendations and was disappointed that the Advisory Committee did not support the recommendations that consideration of expanding the mandate of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund should cease or that certain future after-service health insurance liabilities should be funded on a pay-as-you-accrue rather than a pay-as-you-go basis. Failure to adopt the pay-as-you-accrue approach would expose the organizations to the risk that after-service health insurance liabilities would be unfunded when insurance premiums were due. The Federation trusted that the Advisory Committee's reservations regarding the matter might be overcome over time. Organizations that operated on a pay-as-you-go basis should move to a pay-as-you-accrue basis, in line with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, to

enhance organizations' ability to meet their obligation to provide health benefits to serving and former staff.

80. While the Advisory Committee supported the broadening of the mandate of the Pension Fund to include the investment of after-service health insurance assets, the Working Group, the Pension Fund Board and the Federation did not. The Advisory Committee's recommendation on the matter was directed not at the Working Group but at system organizations whose governing bodies had decided to set aside assets to fund after-service health insurance benefits. In considering possible arrangements to meet after-service health insurance liabilities, the Advisory Committee stated that scenarios in which a reduced share of the premiums was apportioned to the organizations could be explored, despite the General Assembly's approval of the International Civil Service Commission recommendation that the current apportionment of health insurance premiums between the Organization and active and retired staff should be maintained. The organizations' contribution should not be reduced, because doing so would increase the contribution paid by retirees in respect of a benefit intended as deferred compensation already earned. To increase retirees' contributions after the fact would be unfair and would undermine the principle of solidarity, in particular the sharing of burdens between young and old, on which social insurance was based. The Secretary-General had addressed intergenerational equity in his report at the seventieth session (A/70/590) and the acquired rights related to after-service health insurance in his report at the sixty-eighth session (A/68/353); at that time, FAFICS had stated that such rights should be respected in reviews of after-service health insurance schemes. No action should be taken on the proposal that changes in the sharing ratios should be considered.

81. Although the Secretary-General made no recommendations on national health schemes in his current report because work in the area was ongoing, persons insured under the health plans of system organizations should be enrolled in such schemes only with their full agreement and on the understanding that the organizations would evaluate plans on a case-by-case basis to ensure that health-care quality was maintained.

82. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to staff welfare and was committed to the settlement of end-of-service liabilities, including in relation to after-service health insurance, since many staff were ineligible for national social security schemes owing to their service with the United Nations. The Group would seek information regarding the benefits of the Secretary-General's recommendation that the after-service health insurance liability related to staff recruited from 1 January 2020 should be fully funded while the pay-as-you-go approach should be maintained for staff recruited before that date.

83. With regard to the Secretary-General's recommendation that consideration of expanding the mandate of the Pension Fund to include after-service health insurance should cease, she recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/244, had requested the Secretary-General to examine options for including in the mandate of the Pension Fund the administration of after-service health insurance benefits, whose funding was of system-wide concern. The Group requested further information regarding the reasons for which such options could no longer be explored. It would consider the Secretary-General's other proposals on their own merits. Many staff would retire in the coming years and their interests must be taken into account in the consideration of after-service health insurance.

84. **Ms. Grant** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/248 B, had endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendations that the pay-as-you-go approach, which the Assembly considered a viable option, should be maintained, given that the rationale for setting aside budgetary resources meant for current activities to provide for expected future liabilities had not been sufficiently justified by the Secretary-General. The States members of the European Union agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendation on the matter in its current report; changing the status quo was unjustified. They welcomed those of the Secretary-General's proposals that were supported by the Advisory Committee, including in relation to collective negotiations with third party administrators, health-care providers and insurers; harmonizing the principles guiding liability valuation; and promoting inter-agency collaboration in the investment of funds earmarked for the coverage of after-service health insurance liabilities. They would welcome proposals for more cost reductions in health insurance. Funding options must be accompanied by proposals for cost containment and the possible reduction of after-service

health insurance liabilities, and must include present and future beneficiaries. The Secretariat should follow the General Assembly's guidance that recommendations should be formulated in the context of the current funding approach.

*The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.*

United Nations A/C.5/71/SR.27

General Assembly
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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 27th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 10 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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*Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

*Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58: Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017** (*continued*)

*Standards of accommodation for air travel*
(A/71/741, A/71/741/Corr.1 and A/71/822)

1. **Mr. Cutts** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel (A/71/741 and A/71/741/Corr.1), said that the report provided information on those standards for the two-year period ended 30 June 2016 and comparative statistics for the two-year period ended 30 June 2014, as well as analyses of trends during the period from 2006 to 2016.

2. By its resolution 67/254 A, the General Assembly had decided that, subject to certain provisos, the standard of accommodation for air travel for official travellers below the level of Assistant Secretary-General would be business class if a single-leg journey was nine hours or more, and would also be business class for a multi-leg journey if the combined travel time was 11 hours or more. The Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to modify his administrative instructions on standards of accommodation for air travel so that the duration of a journey was determined on the basis of the most economical route available, provided that the total additional time of the whole journey did not exceed the most direct route by four hours. The Assembly had also endorsed recommendations to establish economy class as the standard of accommodation for air travel for consultants and individual contractors, unless determined otherwise by the Secretary-General on the basis of considerations relating to the circumstances of the traveller and the interests of the Organization.

3. The Under-Secretary-General for Management had subsequently promulgated new administrative instructions on official travel (ST/AI/2013/3) and on participants in advisory meetings (ST/AI/2013/5), which included changes in the travel entitlements of non-United Nations officials travelling on behalf of the Organization, with the exception of those explicitly excluded from the new policies, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/254 A.

4. In its resolution 69/274 A, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to take immediate action to limit the use of exceptions to the standards of accommodation, and to analyse the trends in exceptions and report thereon to the General Assembly. During the period from July 2014 to June 2016, the largest increase in requests for exceptions had been in the category of prominent persons, which had resulted from a stricter interpretation than required on the part of the Administration of the standards mandated in resolution 67/254 A. Detailed analyses and explanations of the trends in the number of exceptions granted and the related additional costs were provided in sections II, III and IV of the Secretary-General's report (A/71/741). In its resolution 67/254 A, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to review the use of exceptions for the category of prominent persons and to report thereon to the General Assembly. As additional time was required to review the matter, the Secretary-General was requesting to submit his related proposals at the first part of the Assembly's resumed seventy-third session.

5. In its resolution 69/274 A, the General Assembly had further requested the Secretary-General to provide information on any new trends for making use of frequent flyer miles to improve the administration of travel; detailed updates on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the comprehensive audit of air travel activities and related practices (A/67/695); comprehensive information on air travel activities; consolidated data on the gains achieved through the implementation of section VI of General Assembly resolution 67/254 A; comprehensive information on the effects of the implementation of Umoja on travel administration, including updated information, trends and analysis in all areas relating to air travel in the United Nations; and an assessment of the United Nations standards of accommodation with regard to class of air travel. Those matters were addressed in sections V to X of the Secretary-General's report (A/71/741).

6. The General Assembly had also endorsed the recommendation contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/69/787) to request the Secretary-General to conduct further analysis on the lump-sum travel provision and to provide an updated proposal in that regard. As additional time was required to review the matter, the Secretary-General proposed maintaining the provision at 70 per cent of the least restrictive economy class fare until the first part of the resumed seventy-third session of the General Assembly, when a final proposal would be submitted.

7. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/822), said that resources for official travel should be utilized judiciously in the interest of the Organization.

8. Considering the developments in the air travel industry since the 1970s, notably that business class was now functionally equivalent to yesterday's first class, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should review the Organization's policy on entitlements to first class travel. Moreover, in the light of the frequent official travel undertaken by senior personnel on behalf of the Organization, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to implement a frequent flyer mile programme with respect to official travel undertaken by personnel at the level of Assistant Secretary-General and above, beginning no later than January 2018.

9. He noted that the Secretary-General's report (A/71/741) did not include any proposals relating to the lump-sum travel provision. In the light of the cost reductions arising from the use of the provision, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to implement a pilot scheme from January to December 2018, under which all staff would be required to use the lump-sum option for home leave, family visit or education grant travel.

10. **Mr. Viera** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the effective and efficient utilization of resources for air travel and welcomed the efforts made by the Secretary-General to improve the information provided to Member States in that regard.

11. The Group concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the need to review the Organization's policy on entitlements to first class travel. It recommended against the establishment of a corporate frequent flyer mile programme in the light of the Secretary-General's finding that the costs of managing such a programme more than outweighed any associated benefits and that implementing such a programme at the United Nations would require the deployment of significant additional resources.

12. The Group noted with concern that the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/741) appeared to attribute the spike in authorized exceptions to the changes in the standards of accommodation for air travel endorsed by the General Assembly. In particular, the Group would seek specific information on why members of organs and subsidiary organs, committees, councils and commissions of the United Nations were being treated as exceptions, when the standards pertaining to those persons were indicated in paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 67/254 A. It also noted with concern the low rate of compliance with the directive on advance purchase of tickets for air travel and concurred with the Advisory Committee on the need for enhanced efforts by the Secretariat in that regard. Lastly, he reiterated that any policy changes and new formulations in the area of standards of accommodation for air travel, like other management and financial issues, remained the exclusive prerogative of the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly.

13. **Ms. Grant** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the States members of the European Union supported the Secretary-General in his efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations. She nevertheless noted with concern the increase in overall air travel costs year after year, and underscored the need for the Organization to employ the same strict discipline that Member States applied to themselves.

14. The General Assembly should further refine its policy guidance to the Secretariat on air travel. The significant increase in the number and cost of exceptions approved by the Secretariat remained a concern, notwithstanding the progress made by the Assembly in that regard at its sixty-seventh and sixty-ninth sessions. The standards of accommodation for air travel should also be updated on an ongoing basis in line with developments in the travel practices of national administrations. In addition, managerial accountability must be strengthened to ensure that funds were used judiciously. In that connection, incentives must be developed to address the persistent low levels of compliance with the advance purchase policy directive and recurring over expenditure in travel budgets.

15. In the interest of comprehensively addressing the issue of air travel costs, including daily subsistence allowances, and promoting fairness within the United Nations system, the European Union invited the Secretary-General to undertake a thorough review of the policy on air travel, including for members of organs and subsidiary organs, committees, councils and commissions. Thanks to Umoja, the Secretariat would now be able to provide the Assembly with long-awaited comprehensive information on air travel activities.

16. Her delegation looked forward to discussing how a more centralized travel processing system might increase the visibility and efficiency of travel processing functions and reduce fragmentation in that regard. The Secretary-General should make every effort to develop innovative working practices aimed at ensuring the efficient and effective management of resources.

17. In line with its commitment to protecting the environment, particularly following the adoption of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the European Union fully supported all steps taken by the Secretariat to reduce reliance on air travel, particularly by promoting the use of technological solutions such as videoconferencing.

18. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that the Organization's air travel policies must be reformed in view of their impact on mandate fulfilment and significant financial implications. The data provided in the Secretary-General's report (A/71/741) would contribute to enhancing transparency and ensuring that Member States made informed decisions in identifying opportunities for efficiencies.

19. Efforts should be made to contain travel-related costs by ensuring that travel resources were used only when necessary for carrying out mandated activities; by conducting virtual meetings when possible; and by limiting the number of exceptions to the standards of accommodation.

20. As business class was now functionally equivalent to the first class of the past, business class travel should be used only when warranted and the travel time requirements for its use should be re-evaluated. Economy class should be the standard for air travel for the United Nations, in line with the practice of many Member States. The Organization must follow the example of many States, including her own, in adjusting its travel policies to reflect contemporary travel alternatives and budgetary realities, with a view to effectively targeting its resources towards fulfilling its mandates.

*Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (continued)*

*Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels (continued)*

*Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*
(A/71/365/Add.9 and A/71/595/Add.9)

*Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58: Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration*
(A/71/827; A/C.5/71/19)

21. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed additional resource requirements for 2017 for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/71/365/Add.9), said that Security Council resolution 2321 (2016) mandated the Panel of Experts, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), and the Secretariat to increase their monitoring and reporting activities and to carry out additional tasks as outlined in paragraphs 10 to 21 of the Secretary-General's report. To perform those activities, resources in the amount of $697,400 were required for 2017 to cover the costs of five additional positions proposed for establishment in New York, as well as costs related to travel and information and communications technology. Pending approval of those resources by the General Assembly, the requirements for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2017 were being funded through the commitment authority of the Secretary-General under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 70/250 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses.

22. Introducing the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58: Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/C.5/71/19), she said that additional resources in the amount of $1.2 million were requested for 2017 for the preparation of an intergovernmental conference to adopt a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to authorize the organization of the intergovernmental conference; request the Secretary-General to appoint a Secretary-General of the conference to act as a focal point on behalf of the United Nations system; request the Secretary-General to prepare a note on the organization of work of the conference that would serve as the basis for its precise modalities, to be decided by Member States by January 2018; and request the President of the General Assembly, with the support of the Secretary-General and drawing on the expertise of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other related entities, to organize a series of informal thematic

sessions between April and November 2017 on facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration. The Assembly would also request regional economic commissions to organize discussions among Member States and other stakeholders to examine regional and subregional aspects of international migration, and would request the Secretary-General to present a report on the full range of inputs to the preparatory process and provide Member States with recommendations before the beginning of negotiations in 2018. The proposed activities would be carried out by a broad range of departments and offices, as reflected in table 12 of the statement of programme budget implications.

23. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed additional resource requirements for 2017 for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/71/595/Add.9), said that, while the Advisory Committee acknowledged that the expanded mandate emanating from Security Council resolution 2321 (2016) and the resulting revised planning assumptions would likely lead to an increased workload, it was not convinced that the extent of the additional tasks required could be reliably foreseen at present. The Advisory Committee was of the view that the creation of two separate posts in the Professional category was not justified and therefore recommended against the proposed establishment of the post of Political Affairs Officer. In addition, as no adequate justification had been presented for increasing meeting services support, it recommended against the proposed establishment of the post of Meetings Assistant. The Advisory Committee also recommended a small adjustment to the proposed requirements for travel. It recommended approval of the other resources requested by the Secretary-General.

24. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58 (A/71/827), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended reductions in the proposed requirements for consultancy and travel of staff and experts. It also recommended against approval of the requested resources for conference facilities and the establishment of an additional staff position in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It furthermore noted the need for greater clarity with regard to the role of IOM. Lastly, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should the Assembly adopt the draft resolution, an additional appropriation would be required to cover resource requirements under the sections of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 indicated in paragraph 21 of the Advisory Committee's report.

25. **Mr. Bermeo** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was in favour of approving the resources requested for the implementation of draft resolution A/71/L.58. It recalled the mandates approved under General Assembly resolution 71/1, whereby the Assembly had committed to launching a process of intergovernmental negotiations for the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration at an intergovernmental conference to be held in 2018.

26. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group attached high importance to the issue of migration, particularly given the current unprecedented levels of human mobility worldwide, as underscored in General Assembly resolution 71/1. The response of the international community must therefore be commensurate with the magnitude of the challenges faced in that regard. In the context of the negotiations on resolution 71/1, the Group had strongly defended the proposal to hold an intergovernmental conference in 2018 to adopt a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, and had played a key role in guaranteeing the inclusion, in the final document, of provisions aimed at ensuring the equal treatment of migrants and refugees. As the first major United Nations conference on migration, the intergovernmental conference would represent a major milestone. The resulting global compact would similarly constitute the first United Nations document addressing all aspects of international migration.

27. The Group recognized that the potential cost implications of requirements for meetings and documentation relating to the conference could not be estimated until the modalities of the conference had been determined. It also noted that, according to the related statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/71/19) submitted in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the adoption of the draft resolution would entail additional resource requirements in the amount of $1,244,700 for 2017, which would represent a charge against the contingency fund for the biennium 2016-2017. The Group called for the preparatory process and organization of the conference to be funded through the regular budget, and for the costs of the travel and participation of representatives from developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to be covered by the voluntary trust fund for the

conference proposed under draft resolution A/71/L.58. Lastly, he welcomed the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration and hoped that the Committee would support her in fulfilling her mandate to provide effective guidance for addressing large movements of refugees and migrants.

28. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova, said that the States members of the European Union had contributed actively to the consensus on draft resolution A/71/L.58 and welcomed the detailed and precise information set out in the document.

29. Given the importance that the Organization attached to the issue of safe, orderly and regular migration, the European Union was surprised that, according to the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications, there was no potential for absorbing costs or reprioritizing resources within the existing programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, as provided for under the budget procedure established in General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. His delegation would continue to question the incremental nature of the budget. In particular, as travel of staff and experts and conference management represented significant categories of expenditure, economical and efficient solutions must be found, given the scarcity of available resources.

30. Under paragraph 11 of the draft resolution, the United Nations Secretariat and IOM would jointly service the negotiations and the preparatory process for the adoption of the global compact, the former providing capacity and support and the latter supplying the necessary technical and policy expertise. The European Union was therefore surprised that several Secretariat entities, including regional economic commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, had explicitly requested the assistance of consultants to prepare for the different phases of the preparatory process set out in the draft resolution. While his delegation did not question the direct involvement of those entities in the preparation of the global compact, it wondered why they could not rely on in-house capacity to provide the assistance required.

31. **Mr. Chheena** (Pakistan) said that the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants had been a watershed moment marked by the unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/1, which reaffirmed the international community's commitment to saving lives, protecting rights and sharing responsibility for facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration. The global compact would be an important step towards translating that commitment into tangible action, in the light of the growing global phenomenon of large-scale movements of people across borders and regions. He welcomed the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration, whose leadership and dynamism would be essential for striking delicate balances among interests and perspectives throughout the negotiation process.

32. As the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, IOM worked closely with a broad range of partners to ensure the orderly and humane management of migration; promote international cooperation on migration issues; assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems; and provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees. IOM therefore had a central role to play in the development of the global compact, and further details were required on the specific role of IOM in jointly servicing the negotiations on the global compact, the nature of its contributions in the area of technical and policy expertise and the staff resources that it would provide.

33. Regional economic commissions had an important role to play in organizing discussions among Member States and other stakeholders on regional and subregional aspects of international migration and in providing inputs to the preparatory process for the global compact. The agreed modalities for the development of the global compact provided a valuable substantive basis for Member State-led consultations leading up to the intergovernmental negotiations in 2018. In particular, the six themes proposed in draft resolution A/71/L.58 for the informal sessions to be held between April and November 2017 covered a wide spectrum of issues for consideration. His delegation thanked the Government of Mexico for offering to host a meeting in November 2017 to review the inputs received. In conclusion, Pakistan concurred with the request for additional resources contained in the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/71/19).

34. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that statements of programme budget implications must reflect the intent and spirit of the draft resolutions to which they related. The resources proposed for consultants and travel of staff and experts for the implementation of draft resolution A/71/L.58 were excessive. Such excesses reflected poorly on the

United Nations and its Member States by lending credence to criticisms that the Organization was overly focused on conducting meetings at the expense of fulfilling its mandates. Although the Advisory Committee had begun responsibly trimming some of the proposed resources contained in the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications, additional streamlining was necessary. Her delegation looked forward to the adoption of the draft resolution.

*The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.*

United Nations A/C.5/71/SR.28

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 28th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 31 March 2017, at 3 p.m.

*Chair*: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

## Contents

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

*Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017*

*Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017*

Agenda item 140: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*)

Agenda item 133: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session of the General Assembly

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17-05313 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.*

**Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017** (*continued*)

*Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017* (A/C.5/71/L.27)

*Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.27: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017*

1. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, in section VII of the draft resolution, paragraph 7, line two, the total amount should read "2,801,400 dollars." In section VII, paragraph 8, line five, the amount should read "961,900 dollars."

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.27, as orally amended, was adopted.*

*Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017* (A/C.5/71/L.26)

*Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.26: Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017*

3. *Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.26 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 140: Joint Inspection Unit** (*continued*) (A/C.5/71/L.25)

*Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.25: Joint Inspection Unit*

4. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.25 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals** (*continued*) (A/C.5/71/L.23)

*Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.23: Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch*

5. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.23 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 133: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations** (*continued*) (A/C.5/71/L.24 and A/C.5/71/L.28)

*Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.24: Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat*

6. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.24 was adopted.*

*Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.28: Questions deferred for future consideration*

7. *Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.28 was adopted.*

**Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session of the General Assembly**

8. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed her gratitude to the Committee for working tirelessly and constructively to complete its programme of work within the time frame allotted. She trusted that all delegations would work to ensure that the late evenings and early mornings that had characterized the informal consultations at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session did not become typical of the Committee's working methods.

9. She noted with appreciation the consensus reached on all agenda items at the current session and welcomed the spirit of openness and transparency that had characterized the deliberations.

10. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, noted with appreciation that the Committee had completed its work within the time allotted, despite the hectic final stretch of informal consultations. He welcomed the flexibility shown by delegations, even though the strategies adopted had sometimes required the Group to reframe its positions.

11. The Committee had discussed a number of issues of particular importance to the Group. With respect to the lessons learned from the coordination activities of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), the Group had noted difficulties relating to the fundamental role of the Mission's leadership, as well as the importance of coordination, partnerships, and operational impact and delivery. While recognizing the catalytic role of UNMEER in mobilizing the human and financial resources needed to scale up the response and facilitating the exchange of information among responders from the global to the field levels, the Group had noted challenges relating to harmonization, coordination and overlap between the activities of the Mission and those of other specialized organizations. To avoid potential future health crises, the Group had underscored the importance of improving and adapting existing coordination mechanisms and supporting national and local institutions, with a view to strengthening engagement with actors already on the ground, the African Union, and the affected countries. In that regard, the Group looked forward to the next report of the Board of Auditors on the financial statements of

UNMEER, as well as information on the establishment of standing administrative measures for start-up and crisis situations that would take effect upon confirmation of a crisis or emergency.

12. The Group had also noted the satisfactory completion of the new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch. In particular, it appreciated that the project had incorporated local resources and knowledge and had been designed in line with best practices for sustainable building, with a view to minimizing consumption of energy, water and other resources and reducing long-term operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions. He thanked the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania for the contributions that they had provided to the project at no cost to the Organization. In addition to donating land for the Arusha premises, the Government had completed the final electrical utility connection and the Internet and telecommunications connection, and had constructed a temporary access route to the complex, with connection to the water and electricity systems. Such contributions should be emulated in the interest of reducing costs to the Organization.

13. The Group welcomed the compromise reached on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat. The necessary elements were in place for preventing and combating fraud; implementing results-based management and institutional risk management; evaluating programmes; and strengthening the definition of responsibilities of senior managers, including the delegation of authority for procurement. The Group also attached high importance to the policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and looked forward to the discussions on that issue at the second part of the resumed session.

14. The Committee had reached agreement on the elements of the United Nations information and communications technology policy and on the allocation of necessary resources for the implementation of the draft resolution A/71/L.58 on modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. With respect to the questions deferred for future consideration, the Group hoped that a lasting solution would be found with regard to the proposed United Nations Secretariat contribution to the United Nations Development Group cost-sharing arrangement for the resident coordinator system, following the submission by the Secretary-General of a refined proposal on the arrangement and on management of the financing thereof at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

15. With regard to the standards of accommodation for air travel, the Group had not been provided with sufficient information to determine the appropriateness of increasing the travel time needed for United Nations personnel to qualify for business class beyond the number of hours stipulated in the Secretary-General's administrative instruction on official travel (ST/AI/2013/3) and endorsed in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The Group would not agree to any solution that did not apply to all personnel in an equitable, uniform and transparent manner, taking into account the length of the journey and medical condition of the traveller as determined on the basis of a physician evaluation. While cost-saving efforts should be made to the extent possible, they should never result in discrimination.

16. The Group regretted the Committee's late consideration of the issue of procurement activities and hoped that the next report of the Secretary-General on that topic would include information on, inter alia, the participation of bidders from countries and subregions that hosted peacekeeping operations and special political missions; delegation of procurement authority; companies with subsidiaries registered in developing countries; the concept of sustainable procurement; efforts to ensure that bids were published in the official languages of countries hosting field missions; capacity-building initiatives; and the promotion of equal opportunities for vendors from developing countries.

17. In the interest of consensus-based decision making, delegations must avoid politicizing the administrative, financial and budgetary matters before the Committee. The experience of the current session had once again demonstrated that improving the Committee's working methods entailed adjusting approaches to negotiation. When Member States worked in a spirit of mutual respect and transparency, the Group of African States stood ready to take into account the concerns of all delegations.

18. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union) noted with appreciation the timely issuance of documentation for the first part of the resumed session, while underscoring the need for a collective commitment to improving the Committee's working methods. The status of preparedness of documentation should continue to be monitored as preparations for the second part of the resumed session began, particularly given the anticipated heavy workload and the Committee's history of exceeding the time frame allotted for its deliberations.

19. His delegation welcomed the consensus reached on, inter alia, the programme budget implications of the draft resolution on the modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, the information and communications technology strategy and the draft resolution on the Joint Inspection Unit. It also noted with appreciation the constructive deliberations and timely conclusion of the lessons learned exercise on the activities of UNMEER, as well as the progress made to develop the accountability framework of the Secretariat. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's emphasis on the centrality of accountability and transparency to all of the Organization's policies and activities, including in the area of management.

20. He noted with concern that the approved additional resource requirements for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea barely met the staffing requirements of the Panel and recalled that ensuring timely and adequate financing of special political missions was a core function of the Committee. In that regard, the European Union recognized the political importance of the approval of the resource requirements for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

21. Particularly in the light of the adoption of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, it was regrettable that the Secretariat was the only member of the United Nations Development Group that did not contribute its agreed share of the financing for the resident coordinator system, a situation that reflected poorly on the seriousness of the Fifth Committee and could affect the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the country level. His delegation therefore looked forward to considering the item again at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

22. It was regrettable that the Committee had been unable to reach agreement on the standards of accommodation for air travel. The insistence of some delegations on first class travel entitlements for particular groups and resistance to more judicious use of business class were at odds with the commitment to promoting a more modern, efficient and accountable United Nations. His delegation would welcome robust proposals from the Secretary-General in that regard and encouraged him to reconsider the use of first class travel by United Nations staff. Lastly, the Secretariat should promote a greater understanding of the benefits of sustainable procurement practices in the context of the United Nations.

23. **Mr. Fu** Daopeng (China) said that the Committee had reached consensus, in a spirit of cooperation, on accountability, information and communications technology, special political missions and the Joint Inspection Unit. Sound financial management was essential to United Nations governance, and the Member States were seeking ways of improving financial efficiency, which fell under the Committee's mandate. China would join other Member States in strengthening cooperation in the Committee's work.

24. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that, with regard to accountability, her delegation would seek further information regarding the efforts of the Organization in results-based management. While the revised whistle-blower protection policy was welcome, the Secretary-General must establish a culture of protection for those who reported misconduct. Although the Committee had approved resources for implementation of the mandates of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1874 (2009), it had failed to take decisions on procurement, the contingency fund, the resident coordinator system and standards of accommodation for air travel. At the second part of the resumed session, her delegation would pay close attention to peacekeeping, examine opportunities to cut costs and promote a consensus-based approach.

25. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that the Committee should give adequate consideration to peacekeeping, with a view to effective resource use.

26. **Mr. Burity** (Angola) said that the Committee's discussions must be inclusive and decisions must be taken by consensus. Adherence to high ethical standards and mutual respect would prevent the use of tactics that could adversely affect negotiations.

27. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that, despite the comparatively small number of matters before the Committee, the deliberations at the first part of the resumed session had been complicated and delegations had been unable to reach agreement on some of the items under consideration. Because no decision had been taken on procurement, the General Assembly had no mandate to implement any new reforms in that area. His delegation stood ready to reconsider such reforms at the first part of the resumed seventy-third session.

28. **Mr. García Landa** (Mexico) said that the Committee had assumed its responsibility for ensuring financial resources for many important mandates, in particular those set out in the draft resolution on

modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

29. **The Chair** said that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

*The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.*

United Nations A/C.5/71/SR.29

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

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# Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 29th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 1 May 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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Organization of work

Agenda item 132: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (*continued*)

(b) United Nations peacekeeping operations

Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

*Updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions as at 30 June 2016*

Agenda item 153: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Agenda item 160: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Agenda item 162: Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

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17-06974 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Organization of work** (A/C.5/71/L.29)

1. **The Chair** said that, in the face of persistent structural impediments such as the late issuance of documentation, the Committee should move forward with optimism and a sense of purpose as it strove to complete its work at the second part of the resumed seventy-first session, recalling its essential purpose of ensuring the implementation of the objectives and mandates emanating from the Charter, its leadership role in solving global problems, and the immediate consequences for peace and security of failing to act responsibly, effectively and efficiently. The Committee must also find ways to cope with setbacks while forging ahead in a spirit of collaboration and compromise, with a view to progressively achieving its goals.

2. She invited the Committee to consider the proposed tentative and provisional programme of work for the second part of the resumed seventy-first session, prepared on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/71/L.29).

3. **Mr. Sevilla Borja** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, paid tribute to the men and women serving in peacekeeping operations, in particular those who had lost their lives in the service of peace and security.

4. While the Group acknowledged the efforts of the Bureau of the Committee to disseminate information as soon as possible, it was regrettable that a number of reports to be considered at the second part of the resumed session had been issued late or had not been translated into all official languages in a timely manner, which hampered delegations' preparations for their deliberations. He underscored the importance of multilingualism in that regard. The unfortunate tendency for peacekeeping budgets to be submitted late, in breach of the six-week rule established by the General Assembly, reduced the time available for delegations to consider the financing and policy aspects of peacekeeping operations. The Secretariat should continue its efforts to comply with General Assembly resolutions on the matter. It was also a matter of concern that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was expected to deal with increasing numbers of reports within the same meeting time that it had been allocated years earlier.

5. The Group attached great importance to consideration of the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of peacekeeping operations, in particular cross-cutting issues, closed peacekeeping missions and the peacekeeping support account. At the current part of the resumed session, the Group would focus on a number of issues: ensuring that peacekeeping budgets were based on mission mandates and the real situation on the ground and were not approached as an arbitrary, across-the-board cost-cutting exercise; exploring options to find a fair solution to address unpaid assessments, accounts payable and other liabilities of closed peacekeeping missions so as to settle outstanding claims in missions with cash deficits; providing technical support for applying rules and regulations on reducing the environmental footprint of peacekeeping operations through concrete measures to be implemented across all missions; and reducing unfilled vacancies, including by enacting measures to facilitate the recruitment of personnel from all regions.

6. **Mr. Funes Henriquez** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC attached the utmost importance to the administrative and budgetary aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations; it was vital for those operations to have the necessary resources to implement their mandates.

7. CELAC looked forward to discussing the issue of the financing of individual peacekeeping operations, in particular the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), currently entering the drawdown phase, and the newly established United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), as well as cross-cutting issues and the support account. CELAC was proud of the work done by MINUSTAH, including the exemplary operational performance of its military component, and underscored the need to protect the gains achieved by the mission, particularly in the area of security. In that regard, MINUJUSTH would receive the same support from CELAC that MINUSTAH had historically received. Community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects should be maintained by MINUJUSTH, in view of their critical role in supporting core stabilization objectives in Haiti, particularly consolidation of the rule of law.

8. As each peacekeeping operation had a stand-alone budget, approved in accordance with its mandate and specific needs, peacekeeping budgets must be considered individually to ensure the effective and efficient discharge of their respective mandates and adequate provision of resources to support their activities, with a view to strengthening the peacekeeping agenda.



17-00974

9. It was regrettable that the Committee had been unable to agree on the necessary reform of the funding and backstopping arrangements for special political missions. The current administrative and budgetary arrangements for those missions were inadequate, and had an adverse impact on the regular budget and the accountability, governance and transparency of the Organization. The deficiencies of the current arrangements must be corrected, as called for by the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors.

10. By its resolution 65/293, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals to address the issue of outstanding amounts due to Member States from closed peacekeeping missions that were in net cash deficit. The relevant current and previous reports must be considered and the issue resolved; Member States in arrears to closed missions must meet their financial obligations. Lastly, the Committee must complete its work on time and, to that end, the Secretariat should make every effort to submit reports within set deadlines in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

11. **Ms. Nalwanga** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group was committed to supporting initiatives aimed at promoting international peace and security, in particular peacekeeping missions. It was grateful to all personnel involved in peacekeeping operations and paid special tribute to United Nations and African Union peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the service of peace.

12. The Group was concerned that a substantial number of reports had been submitted late and had not been translated into all official languages in a timely manner. It expected that the programme of work would be updated regularly to take into account progress made in negotiations and that Member States would be given adequate time to consider reports thoroughly. The Secretariat must ensure that the six-week rule for the distribution of required documents was observed.

13. The Group would scrutinize the budget proposals for peacekeeping missions to ensure that the challenges faced by such missions were addressed, particularly in the areas of security and safety; facilities and infrastructure, including accommodations; logistical support; and medical structures and support.

14. The integrity of the United Nations depended on its ability to deliver its core mandates successfully, which entailed the protection of civilians, human rights and the environment. With resources becoming increasingly scarce, the Organization should explore ways to improve efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, while also ensuring that missions were adequately resourced to address new challenges.

15. The total proposed resource requirements for the 2017/18 period amounted to $7.972 billion, inclusive of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and the support account, and exclusive of voluntary contributions in kind. That represented an increase of $82.7 million, or 1.0 per cent, in comparison with the approved resources for the 2016/17 period. Noting that the figures contained in the overview report on the financing of peacekeeping operations (A/71/809) were subject to change on the basis of ongoing developments on the ground in certain missions and the deliberations of the Security Council, the Group trusted that information on the impact of such changes would be provided to the Committee during the current part of the resumed session. It also stressed that budget rules would not be modified to accommodate presumed changes still to be negotiated by the Council.

16. The Group attached great importance to the allocation of adequate resources to peacekeeping operations, specifically to those in Africa, taking into account the complexity of their mandates and the unique challenges faced on the ground. Consideration of peacekeeping budgets should not be approached as a simple cost-reduction exercise, but as a responsible exercise in mandate implementation, resource allocation and policy guidance. In that regard, the Group would review performance reports and budget proposals for all closed and active missions, including the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), the Regional Service Centre and the United Nations Logistics Base, in conjunction with the findings of oversight bodies and the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

17. The Group would also monitor cross-cutting issues linked to individual mandates, including mission support, Umoja implementation, facilities and infrastructure, oversight, supply chain management, environmental and waste management, and implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Peace Operations. Given their importance for promoting sustainable peace in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, quick-impact projects and programmatic activities should play a more prominent role in peacekeeping operations. Lastly, the Group would examine the Secretary-General's planned reform initiatives, while noting that such initiatives must be implemented with the approval of the General Assembly.

18. The Committee had a heavy workload, but must complete its work on time so as not to affect the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Lastly, the Committee should conduct its work in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, and refrain from negotiations in small configurations behind closed doors.

19. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the States members of the European Union would continue to do what was necessary to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping served to maintain peace and security in a rapidly changing international environment. They recognized the sacrifices made by peacekeepers and paid tribute to those who had lost their lives in the line of duty.

20. As the largest collective financial contributor to peacekeeping, the States members of the European Union attached great importance to effective collaboration between all Member States and the Secretariat. The European Union would closely examine the budgets of all peacekeeping missions, including support functions, with a view to providing them with adequate resources to carry out their mandates.

21. He called on all Committee members to work in a spirit of pragmatism to ensure the timely conclusion of negotiations. Should the Committee be forced to continue its deliberations into June, it must be during normal working hours and with the provision of appropriate conference services and the essential support of the Committee secretariat.

22. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that the Committee would be responsible for ensuring that peacekeeping operations had the financial resources needed to fulfil their mandates in situations of increasing complexity and security risks. Mexico appreciated the contributions of civil, military and police personnel participating in peacekeeping missions worldwide.

23. His delegation would carefully consider the reports on the budget performance of peacekeeping missions and the Secretary-General's proposals. In particular, it would seek to ensure that MINUSTAH was provided with adequate resources to address challenges on the ground. It welcomed the progress made towards institutional normalization and the restoration of constitutional order in Haiti, while underscoring the importance of the ongoing presence and involvement of the international community and assurances of continued United Nations support for Haiti. In that regard, the transition to MINUJUSTH must be carried out responsibly and gradually to ensure the continuation of the vital activities of the United Nations system. Haiti must be supported in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including through building its public health capacities, ensuring the reintegration of returnees, and improving water and sanitation, education, and transportation infrastructure.

24. His delegation would closely examine the Secretary-General's proposed measures for responding to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse with a view to fully implementing the Organization's zero-tolerance policy. In particular, it would focus on assisting victims, ending impunity, promoting the involvement of civil society and external partners, and strengthening strategic communications to enhance awareness and transparency.

25. His Government was committed to contributing human and financial resources to peacekeeping operations. Member States must pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions, and all outstanding dues to the Organization must be paid. In that regard, he recalled that the scale of assessments adopted by the General Assembly was designed to reflect Member States' capacity to pay and the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security.

26. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat and the entire United Nations system in responding to challenges under the three pillars of the Organization. Discussions in that regard must take into account the recommendations of, inter alia, the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture and the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, including with respect to the ongoing reform of the current dysfunctional arrangements for the funding and backstopping of special political missions.

27. Work under the peace and security pillar must focus on increasing transparency and accountability, while also strengthening prevention, inclusion, development, political solutions and human rights in the broadest sense. Those elements were essential to creating a United Nations suited to the twenty-first century and should guide the Committee in developing a creative vision for achieving change that was beneficial to all stakeholders.

28. **Mr. Fu** Dapeng (China) said that peacekeeping operations were critical for maintaining international peace and security. China — the second largest contributor to the peacekeeping budget and a major troop contributor, with around 2,600 peacekeepers active in various operations — strongly supported United Nations peacekeeping and paid tribute to all mission personnel.

29. The Committee should take a practical, scientific and prudent approach to peacekeeping budgeting to ensure that missions were given adequate resources to support the Organization's role in maintaining peace and security. To that end, peacekeeping budgets should not be subject to arbitrary reductions or impractical increases.

30. The mandates of peacekeeping operations and their respective budgets should respect the sovereignty of host countries and reflect their views and needs. As troop- and police-contributing countries had made significant contributions to United Nations peacekeeping, the Organization should reimburse their peacekeeping expenses in a timely manner and give priority to their candidates in the recruitment of peacekeeping staff.

31. Peacekeeping capacities should be improved to reduce waste, promote efficient resource utilization and optimize logistical support mechanisms. The Secretariat must strengthen internal management and exercise budgetary discipline in order to make effective use of every cent contributed by Member States. Member States must also pay their peacekeeping assessments on time, in full and without conditions to ensure the Organization's financial health and the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates.

32. His delegation regretted the delayed issuance of documentation for the current part of the resumed session and hoped that the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee would take measures to improve the quality, reduce the length and ensure the timely distribution of reports.

33. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan) said that the singular role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security was particularly critical in the light of increasingly complex threats and challenges to peace. The continued rise in demand for peacekeeping activities attested to the high level of confidence, trust and faith in the United Nations and its positive impact on the lives of millions worldwide.

34. Pakistan was one of the largest and most consistent contributors to peacekeeping, having participated in 41 missions in 23 countries since 1960. Over 7,000 Pakistani peacekeepers were currently active in various operations, and 144 had made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. The pledges made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan in support of peacekeeping operations at the 2015 Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping were a testament to her country's continued commitment to United Nations peacekeeping.

35. Her delegation took note of the Secretary-General's recent announcement of his intention to reform the Organization's peace and security architecture. While the cost effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping was commendable, continuously asking peacekeepers to do more with less was unsustainable. Credible action must be taken to provide missions with adequate resources to fulfil their mandates and to establish realistic and permanent mechanisms for reviewing and updating reimbursements to States that provided troops and contingent-owned equipment.

36. Effectively confronting challenges to peacekeeping would require the continued political commitment of Member States. Improved "triangular" cooperation between troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat in all aspects of mandate development, implementation and review, especially in the case of rapidly deteriorating situations on the ground, was also required. In addition, the protection of civilians must be guaranteed by establishing clearly defined peacekeeping mandates; preventing the outbreak of armed conflicts and addressing their root causes; and finding inclusive and lasting political solutions to conflicts. Troop-contributing countries should be represented at the leadership and senior levels in the field and at Headquarters in a manner commensurate with their contributions to peacekeeping. Lastly, the Organization must take a capability-driven approach to peacekeeping by providing missions with well-trained and well-equipped peacekeepers and strengthening partnerships with regional and subregional organizations.

37. Increasingly overstretched capacity, particularly in field deployments, compromised the objectives of peacekeeping missions, complicated exit strategies and jeopardized the safety and security of peacekeepers. Rather than cutting costs, adequate resources should be allocated for the operational deployment of peacekeeping forces, particularly in hostile environments. Pakistan would continue to serve as an agent of peace and security for those affected by conflict.

38. **Mr. Matjila** (South Africa) said that delays in the preparation of documentation prevented the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee from adequately examining reports.

39. In line with the recommendations of recent high-level reviews of peace operations, prevention and mediation should be prioritized in peace and security efforts, particularly given the high cost of peacekeeping and humanitarian responses and the need to protect development gains. Political solutions should also remain the ultimate objective of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Such operations nevertheless played a critical role in maintaining international peace and security through supporting political and peace processes authorized by the Security Council. They should therefore be given the necessary resources, entrusted with appropriate mandates and adequately equipped to protect themselves and discharge their mandates. Thus, while his delegation stood ready to consider the related budget proposals, it would not support arbitrary efficiency gains or forced budget reductions that compromised the effectiveness, efficiency and credibility of peacekeeping operations.

40. He welcomed the progress made in strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, in particular the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, which recognized that preventing and resolving peace and security challenges in Africa exceeded the capacity of any single organization. He also looked forward to the submission of the Secretary-General's report on options for joint planning, mandating and financing of African Union peace support operations by the African Union and the Security Council, in line with Security Council resolution 2320 (2016), and reiterated that assessed contributions were the most reliable and sustainable source of support for such operations. The commitment to meaningful cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union reflected in Security Council resolutions 1809 (2008) and 2033 (2012) should be maintained and translated into practical steps to ensure that peacekeeping missions in Africa had the capacity required to fulfil their mandates.

41. He paid tribute to the men and women serving in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations, in particular those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace and security. In order to ensure that troops operated in secure environments, they should be able to use all available resources, including technology, to enhance their effectiveness in responding to asymmetrical threats. The deployment of the United Nations Force Intervention Brigade by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) provided a credible example of success in that regard.

42. In line with its commitment to mainstreaming gender in conflict prevention, resolution and mediation, South Africa had increased the number of women that it deployed in peacekeeping operations, in particular in senior leadership positions. He encouraged all Member States to contribute more female personnel to peacekeeping missions and to strengthen gender mainstreaming in leadership positions in the Secretariat. Lastly, his delegation attached high importance to the zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations and had taken timely and decisive action against the perpetrators of such abuses.

43. **Mr. Minami** (Japan) said that his delegation strongly supported United Nations peacekeeping operations. While necessary resources should be provided to ensure the successful implementation of peacekeeping mandates, efficient, effective and accountable management of peacekeeping operations was crucial, particularly as the related budgets were funded by the taxpayers of Member States. More importantly, having redundant resources that were not properly managed would undermine the effective operations and long-term sustainability of the Organization. The Committee should reach agreement on budget levels that would meet the actual requirements of each mission, by examining the levels of civilian staff and operational costs and the success of efficiency measures.

44. Assessed contributions should be used only for activities or outputs that were determined appropriate for funding by all Member States on the basis of the related mandates. The Committee must scrutinize the resource requirements proposed by the Secretary-General to ensure that they corresponded strictly to the mandates approved by the Organization's intergovernmental bodies. Lastly, consideration of other items at the second part of the resumed session should be deferred until after the deliberations on peacekeeping budgets, in order to guarantee their timely conclusion.

45. **Ms. Norman Chalet** (United States of America) paid tribute to the men and women who had served in peacekeeping missions, including those who had given their lives in the cause of peace. The United States supported the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance the capacity of missions to respond to evolving conditions and threats on the ground. It attached great importance to initiatives to improve performance in the field, including by developing capabilities and strengthening accountability for poor performance and misconduct, particularly sexual exploitation and abuse. Her delegation would also continue to support efforts

to strengthen leadership, improve planning and analysis, and integrate modern technology in peacekeeping missions, and looked forward to the Secretary-General's proposals on how to reconfigure the United Nations peace and security architecture to better support field missions.

46. The United States would examine peacekeeping mandates to ensure that they were fit for purpose, achievable and in line with realities on the ground. When peacekeeping was not the most appropriate tool for promoting collective security interests, other options should be considered, and, in situations where missions fulfilled a genuine need, they must demonstrate concrete results, in view of the significant investments made by Member States. In that regard, her delegation would closely examine the Secretary-General's request for $7.97 billion for peacekeeping in 2017/18, which represented a 1 per cent increase over the budget for 2016/17. Peacekeeping budgets should represent actual requirements, be based on realistic planning assumptions and reflect efficiencies gained through ongoing management initiatives. While the 2017/18 budget proposal provided for expansions in some of the most challenging, insecure missions, it also reflected requirements for long-standing missions that were ripe for change.

47. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) underscored the need to ensure that peacekeeping operations were provided with adequate resources and that peacekeeping budgets were based on mission mandates and the real situation on the ground. He thanked the Department of Field Support for organizing the annual field trip for Committee members.

48. As a troop-contributing country and founding member of the United Nations, Paraguay had consistently promoted the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates and was deeply committed to the principles of the Charter, as evidenced by its participation in six active peacekeeping missions. He concluded by recognizing the sacrifices made by peacekeepers, including those who had lost their lives in the line of duty.

49. **Mr. Burity** (Angola) paid tribute to United Nations uniformed and civilian personnel, particularly those who had paid the ultimate price. He said that, in an era of increasingly scarce resources, efficiency must be increased and accountability strengthened. At the same time, missions must be provided with the resources required to discharge their mandates. His delegation attached particular importance to the financing of MONUSCO, UNSOS, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The General Assembly had repeatedly indicated that peacekeeping budget proposals must be based on existing mandates approved by the Security Council. That meant presenting a budget that covered a 12-month period, together with a request for full assessment. His delegation would not agree to an approach that prejudged any mandate. In considering peacekeeping budget proposals, the Committee should take into account the specific mandate and unique circumstances of each mission.

50. The late issuance of documentation, which impeded the timely consideration of matters before the Committee, should be addressed as a matter of priority, and all documentation should be available by the second week of May 2017. The conduct of deliberations should be inclusive and transparent. Negotiations in small configurations were inefficient and created mistrust among delegations. The Committee should avoid practices that undermined intergovernmental processes. In addition to political support, the Committee must provide adequate resources to peacekeeping and special political missions in a timely manner.

51. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that the second part of the resumed session traditionally focused on the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and the Committee had a large number of reports on that subject to consider within a limited time frame. Documents must be submitted to the Member States in a timely manner, in accordance with current procedures. The total requirements for peacekeeping operations and their supporting bodies in the note by the Secretary-General on proposed budgetary levels for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/C.5/71/21) were $7.97 billion, considerably more than the level set by the General Assembly for the current period. The Committee must study ways of limiting increases in peacekeeping appropriations, in particular for support activities, without adversely affecting the performance of the missions' basic political functions. In identifying savings, the Committee should compare the size of missions and their ability to absorb funding shortages. The financial and human resources available to small operations, in particular those whose staffing had already been subject to the review procedure, should not be decreased, to avoid hindering the fulfilment of Security Council mandates.

52. The discussions regarding cross-cutting issues in peacekeeping would be difficult. The Committee must evaluate progress in the implementation of the instructions contained in General Assembly resolution 70/286. His delegation was concerned about the lack of transparency related to the costs of and lessons learned from the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in field missions, the increase in expenditure on environmental protection projects and the lack of clarity in the methodology for realizing the benefits of the global field support strategy. Serious analysis of the Secretary-General's proposals related to sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly those that would result in the establishment of temporary posts, was required. His delegation would verify that such initiatives complied with international law and with the agreements between the United Nations and countries that contributed peacekeeping contingents, and would request detailed justification of additional resource requirements, given the complex situations faced by Member States in financing peacekeeping.

53. **The Chair** said that she took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that adjustments would be made as necessary during the course of the session.

54. *It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 132: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors** (*continued*)

**(b) United Nations peacekeeping operations**
(A/71/5 (Vol. II)), A/71/801 and A/71/845)

55. **Mr. Bajaj** (Chair of the Audit Operations Committee of the Board of Auditors), introducing the financial report and audited financial statements for the 12-month period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 and report of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/71/5 (Vol. II)), said that although the implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) had posed challenges to the Administration and the Board in the previous reporting period, the Administration had made progress in using the new accounting and reporting frameworks in the period under review. The Board had issued an unqualified opinion on the financial statements, which presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the United Nations peacekeeping operations as at 30 June 2016 and their financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with IPSAS. The overall peacekeeping budget for the financial year 2015/16 had been $8.3 billion, a decrease of 3.2 per cent compared with the previous year's budget of $8.57 billion. Expenditure had decreased by 3.4 per cent, from $8.3 billion in 2014/15 to $8.02 billion in 2015/16. An amount of $0.28 billion had been unutilized. The year ended 30 June 2016 had been the third year of the preparation of the financial statements under IPSAS. By strengthening the preparation of the statements, the Administration had improved accuracy and reduced the number of errors requiring rectification.

56. Of the 31 recommendations made by the Board in 2014/15, 15 had been implemented, 5 had been overtaken by events, 10 were under implementation and 1 had been partially implemented. In the previous three financial years, 116 (81 per cent) of a total of 143 recommendations had been implemented, 10 (7 per cent) had been overtaken by events and 17 (12 per cent) were under implementation or had not been implemented. The Administration had addressed the Board's concerns and had enhanced financial control and management. Transparency, fairness and responsiveness in procurement had increased and the physical verification of expendable and non-expendable property had improved, but, as in previous years, more progress was needed in accounting, air operations, medical services and environmental and waste management. The financial position of peacekeeping was stable, with sufficient cash resources to sustain core operations.

57. In the financial statements submitted to the Board on 30 September 2016, the employee benefits liabilities had been understated by $440.1 million, which had resulted in an overstatement of net assets in the same amount. The misstatement had been caused by the late transmission of census data to the external actuary, the actuary's erroneous valuation of the liabilities and weaknesses in the Administration's review of the actuary's valuation. The financial statements had had to be revised twice as a result of the Board's audit.

58. The workplans defined for offices and sections of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations reflected the compacts of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Assistant Secretaries-General for Operations and for Rule of Law and Security Institutions and the Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, and included objectives, expected accomplishments and performance measures. Most of the workplans were only partly suited to monitoring whether the activities of the offices and sections were appropriate for achieving the objectives set in the compacts. Restructuring the workplans and linking them to the compacts would enable the Department to fulfil its mandates more transparently and would allow management to improve staff efficiency.

59. The Department of Field Support had established a property management performance index to enhance the visibility of missions' property management and serve as an indicator of achievement in results-based budgeting. The index had revealed that missions had performed well in accountability but less well in stewardship. If the index was to prevent weaknesses in property management, the underlying data must be reliable, consistent and up to date. The Department must maintain data quality before and during the decommissioning of the Galileo inventory system in 2017 and help missions identify shortfalls and underperformance. The roles of the Strategic Air Operations Centre of the United Nations Global Service Centre and the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, in the coordination of air assets were unclear. Neither centre was involved in aircraft tasking, flight operations or flight safety, for which the missions remained fully responsible. Because of a lack of governance documents and the fact that the Aviation Manual 2005 had not been reviewed, the centres did not have the guidance necessary for their activities. Their standard operating procedures should be updated.

60. The Administration should intensify its efforts to establish a global acquisition plan. To maximize the opportunities provided by consolidated procurement, mission requirements must be analysed. The Administration should develop a procurement strategy on the basis of the plan. The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support had delegated procurement authority to the directors and chiefs of mission support, who had delegated it to their procurement staff. The Department of Field Support must ensure that it had an overview of missions' procurement sections, including their staffing and training. Monitoring procurement procedures was challenging because the Umoja business intelligence module was still under development; reports on systems contracts could not be produced in Umoja and the end-to-end procurement process could not be captured. Such deficiencies must be rectified.

61. Peacekeeping operations frequently hired consultants and individual contractors. To avoid unnecessary costs, missions should not consider awarding a contract until they had established that the work could not be done by staff. Work assignments requiring consultants or individual contractors should be described in greater detail, and their duration should be appraised more realistically. The justification for temporary duty assignments, under which staff were sent from one mission to another or between Headquarters and missions, was not always convincing. The Administration had analysed such assignments in missions in East and Central Africa but did not have complete data for other missions or for Headquarters. To avoid unnecessary travel costs and daily subsistence allowances, the Administration should monitor the use of such assignments.

62. Some medical units deployed by troop-contributing countries did not meet medical service requirements because they lacked drugs, consumables, experienced personnel, particularly in the field of endemic diseases, or doctors. The Administration should ensure that missions met their responsibilities for medical care, which was essential to the health and well-being of personnel.

63. Environmental issues were increasingly important for missions and were the subject of attention by internal and external observers. The Advisory Committee, in its previous report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/70/742), had recalled the General Assembly's request, in its resolution 69/307, for the Secretary-General to reduce the overall environmental footprint of each peacekeeping mission. Although the Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had made efforts to ensure that missions followed their guidance on the matter, missions must do more to protect the environment by treating wastewater, using solar power, not allowing car engines to idle, using bus shuttles rather than cars and managing waste. In accordance with the Advisory Committee's request pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/286, the Board had published on its website a compilation of lessons learned from the global field support strategy.

64. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors concerning United Nations peacekeeping operations for the financial period ended 30 June 2016 (A/71/801), said that section II of the report contained additional information in response to the recommendations in the Board's report (A/71/5 (Vol. II)). The Secretary-General's report took into account the General Assembly's request in resolution 70/238 C for the Secretary-General to indicate an expected time frame for the implementation of the Board's recommendations. It included the level of priority given to, status of and office responsible for the implementation of the recommendations in the Board's current and previous reports. For the period ended 30 June 2016, the Secretariat had given high priority to the recommendations on the actuarial valuation of employee benefits liabilities; workplans of the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations; the preparation of the annual financial reports of welfare and recreation committees; asset and property management; standard costing of property, plant and equipment; the review of the useful lives of assets; air operations; medical services; and environmental and waste management.

65. In its report, the Board recommended that procurement officers and requisitioners should track, monitor and report on procurement procedures and that the Administration should help missions determine whether external consultants and individual contractors needed to be hired or the required expertise was available within the Organization; if in-house capacity could not be found, the Administration should develop a long-term strategy on the matter.

66. For the periods ended in June 2014 and June 2015, high priority had been given to the recommendations on budget formulation and management, asset management and monitoring, acquisition planning, inventory management, rotation of strategic deployment stocks, travel management, requirements for unmanned aerial vehicles, delays in procurement, information security, the use of information and communications technology assets, and the governance and mainstreaming of and cost-benefit analysis relating to the global field support strategy. The Administration had accepted all the Board's recommendations and had thoroughly reviewed their implementation. As at February 2017, 116 of the Board's 143 recommendations for the previous three financial periods had been implemented, 17 were under implementation and 10 had been overtaken by events.

67. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/845), said that the report contained the Advisory Committee's comments related to the Board's observations on budget formulation and management, asset and property management, the use of consultants, travel management and staff welfare. The Advisory Committee's report on observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues related to United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/71/836) reflected the Board's observations regarding air operations, budgetary redeployments, environmental and waste management, human resources management and procurement. The Advisory Committee was of the view that its comments on the Board's findings were best considered in conjunction with its observations on cross-cutting issues. The Board's recommendations, whose overall rate of implementation had not improved, should be implemented in full and in a timely manner.

68. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the financial oversight provided by the Board of Auditors. The work of the Board complemented that of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Joint Inspection Unit, and its report allowed the Committee to establish whether peacekeeping budgets were managed in such a way as to provide value for money. The Group noted the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the Board's recommendations (A/71/801). It had examined the Board's observations, comments and recommendations on the financial position and financial reporting, budget formulation and management, and human resources and asset management of peacekeeping operations.

69. For the 2015/16 period, 55 recommendations had been issued, compared to 31 for 2014/15, but some had been overtaken by events because of delays in implementation. The Administration should implement the Board's recommendations in full and in a timely manner. The Group would consider any proposal to facilitate implementation of recommendations that required General Assembly approval. The Board had reiterated some recommendations made in its previous reports; weaknesses, including omissions and inactivity, persisted in budget formulation, contracting, procurement, asset management and financial prudence, and should be addressed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat should provide sufficient information in a timely manner and conduct quality assurance to avoid the errors described in the Board's report. The Group was concerned about long-outstanding inter-agency accounts receivable, redeployments between and within expenditure groups, asset valuation, cost recovery management, over-reliance on consultants and individual contractors, fraud and presumptive fraud, non-compliance with the air travel management policy, and environmental and waste management.

**Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations** (*continued*)

*Updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions as at 30 June 2016* (A/71/652 and A/71/856)

70. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions as at 30 June 2016 (A/71/652), said that the report provided information regarding 29 missions, including the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), the United Nations Mission in the Central

African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) and the United Nations Supervision Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (UNSMIS), which had been closed since 2015. As at 30 June 2016, 5 missions had had net cash deficits, totalling $86.1 million, and 24 had had net cash surpluses, totalling $67.7 million. Pending the receipt of outstanding assessed contributions, troop-contributing countries were owed $62.9 million. Because the General Assembly had deferred consideration of the proposals in the reports of the Secretary-General at the sixty-sixth, sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth sessions (A/66/665, A/67/739 and A/68/666) to address the outstanding dues to Member States in respect of contingent-owned equipment and letters of assist for closed missions with cash deficits, no new proposals were made in the current report.

71. While circumstances had improved in recent years, cash surpluses had been used to alleviate occasional shortfalls in active operations in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Peak borrowings, which usually occurred in July and August, had declined from $57 million in August 2013 to $40 million in July 2016. The balance of cross-borrowings at the end of December 2016 had been $26.0 million. The General Assembly was requested to consider the proposals made by the Secretary-General, in his reports on the updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions at the sixty-seventh, sixty-eighth, sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions (A/67/739, A/68/666, A/69/659 and A/70/552), to address the cash requirements of active operations and, if no new mechanism was approved, to allow the retention of the net cash balance of $67.7 million available in 24 closed missions as at 30 June 2016.

72. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/856), said that the General Assembly, in its decision 70/553 C, had deferred until the current session consideration of the five previous reports of the Secretary-General (A/66/665, A/67/739, A/68/666, A/69/659 and A/70/552) and of the Advisory Committee (A/66/713, A/67/837, A/68/837, A/69/827 and A/70/829) on the updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions, and reiterated its observations and recommendations on the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his five previous reports to settle outstanding liabilities in such missions. The General Assembly had repeatedly called for Member States to pay their assessed contributions on time, in full and without conditions. The decline in peak levels of borrowing by active peacekeeping missions reflected more timely receipt of such contributions. The Advisory Committee recommended that the net cash balance proposed for retention to cover the temporary borrowing needs of active missions should be reduced to $43.0 million, the highest level of borrowing in the previous three calendar years, and that any available cash surplus over that amount should be returned to Member States.

73. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Member States were obliged under the Charter to pay their assessed contributions in full, without conditions and in a timely manner. Member States in arrears with their assessed contributions to closed peacekeeping missions should pay them expeditiously. The Group was concerned by the cash deficits in several closed missions as a result of Member States' non-payment of arrears, and by cross-borrowing from closed missions. By General Assembly resolution 65/293, the Secretary-General had been requested to submit proposals to address outstanding payments to Member States, particularly troop- and police-contributing countries, in respect of closed operations with cash deficits. The Committee should agree on a resolution that would sustainably address the matter.

**Agenda item 153: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus** (A/71/580, A/71/763 and A/71/836/Add.3)

**Agenda item 160: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East**

**(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force** (A/71/631, A/71/781 and A/71/836/Add.2)

**(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon** (A/71/640, A/71/765, A/71/765/Corr.1 and A/71/836/Add.5)

**Agenda item 162: Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara** (A/71/639, A/71/760, A/71/760/Corr.1 and A/71/836/Add.1)

74. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/580) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/763) for UNFICYP, said that the proposed budget for 2017/18 amounted to $56.0 million, an increase of 2.2 per cent over the 2016/17 budget. The Force was important in maintaining a calm and secure environment and rebuilding trust between the

communities in Cyprus. Progress had been made in the negotiations between the leaders of the communities to find a settlement.

75. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/631) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/781) for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), she said that the proposed 2017/18 budget of $62.3 million represented an increase of 30.5 per cent over the 2016/17 budget. In March 2017, the Advisory Committee had approved a request for the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of $8.8 million for the current period owing to the Force's return to its positions on the Bravo side of the area of separation.

76. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/640) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/765 and A/71/765/Corr.1) for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), she said that the proposed 2017/18 budget of $494.8 million represented an increase of 1.2 per cent over the 2016/17 budget. The situation in the south of Lebanon was calm but fragile, and the Force's liaison and coordination role was particularly important.

77. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/639) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/760 and A/71/760/Corr.1) for MINURSO, she said that the proposed 2017/18 budget of $55.2 million, exclusive of budgeted voluntary contributions in kind, represented a 5.0 per cent increase over the 2016/17 budget. The return of international staff members would allow the Mission to resume some of its core functions and overcome the operational challenges of the previous months.

78. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNFICYP (A/71/836/Add.3), said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $459,800 in the Secretary-General's proposed 2017/18 budget. The civilian staffing review recommended by the Advisory Committee and endorsed in General Assembly resolution 70/273 had not been completed. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to complete the review before the submission of the 2018/19 budget proposal for the mission.

79. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNDOF (A/71/836/Add.2), he said that in the period 2017/18 the Force's highest priority would be its return to Camp Faouar. The Advisory Committee recommended reductions under official travel and facilities and infrastructure, and adjustments to the vacancy rates for civilian personnel.

80. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNIFIL (A/71/836/Add.5), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended the abolishment of 9 of the 19 posts proposed for reassignment, for whose functions insufficient justification had been provided; a more realistic vacancy rate for international staff; and a 20-per-cent reduction in the proposed resources for official travel. The Advisory Committee also made recommendations on facilities and infrastructure.

81. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on MINURSO (A/71/836/Add.1), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of almost $1,700,600 in the proposed 2017/18 budget. With regard to the proposed transfer of functions to the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, the Advisory Committee recommended that eight posts in the Finance and Budget Section and the Human Resources Section of MINURSO should be included in the 2017/18 budget for the mission rather than abolished, in view of the General Assembly's request for the Secretary-General to submit at the main part of the seventy-second session a report containing a comprehensive and fully developed proposal on the global service delivery model. The absence of 17 staff on special leave with full pay since March 2016 must be urgently addressed to minimize the cost to the Organization of paying salaries when services had not been rendered. The Advisory Committee was concerned by the lack of effort to assign the staff temporarily to other operations and expected the Secretary-General to update the General Assembly on the matter at the current session.

82. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the deployment of UNDOF had been necessitated by the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and the refusal of Israel to abide by Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for a full withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967, so that the financing of the Force was the responsibility of the Israeli aggressor in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1874 (S-IV). The Secretary-General's reports must be neutral, not politicized, and must reflect reality, but the reports on UNDOF used unclear language and ignored the reason for the deterioration in the security situation on the Bravo side, namely, terrorist operations carried out by armed terrorist groups affiliated with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaida, such as the Nusrah Front, that received direct and indirect

assistance from countries known to all, at the forefront of which was Israel, the occupying Power.

83. His delegation welcomed the return of UNDOF to some of the positions that it had previously abandoned. His Government had fully supported the Force's redeployment in the area of separation, from which it was working to expel the terrorists. The Committee should approve the resources needed for the Force to return to all its positions. His delegation objected to the fact that the Secretary-General had ignored many of the conditions on the ground and had characterized the crisis as a civil conflict and the terrorist groups as non-State armed groups, thereby disregarding the fact that the Security Council had designated those groups as terrorist groups. The report should be officially corrected, and future reports of the Secretary-General should reflect reality.

84. Compliance with the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and the agreement governing the Force's basic operations was essential. The work of United Nations political or humanitarian missions in the region must not be allowed to overlap with that of UNDOF, which was military in nature and restricted to the monitoring of compliance with the Agreement and unrelated to Syrian domestic affairs. His delegation objected to the references in the Secretary-General's reports to continuing cooperation between UNDOF and the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria; such cooperation exceeded the Force's mandate and ignored the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and the agreement governing the Force's basic operations. The work of UNDOF had no connection with the political process and the Office of the Special Envoy.

85. His Government had welcomed UNDOF since its establishment and had supported the Disengagement of Forces Agreement as a temporary measure pending implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981) and an end to the occupation of the Golan, and not as an alternative to a lasting settlement. It condemned the Israeli acts of aggression against Syria of 17 March and 27 April 2017, provocations that showed that Israel had no respect for international law. His Government acknowledged the noble mission of UNDOF and paid tribute to the countries that contributed to the Force.

86. **Mr Wax** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, paid tribute to peacekeeping personnel, who often worked in dangerous circumstances. He said that the challenges of financing peacekeeping must be addressed so that missions could implement their mandates, and his delegation welcomed the Secretariat's innovative approach to the increasingly complex threats. That approach must be continually updated on the ground and at Headquarters so that peacekeepers had the equipment, technology and medical training to perform their mandates safely. Missions must reduce their environmental footprint through waste management, clean energy and sustainable water production. While their activities were essential, their efficiency must be enhanced.

87. The accusations of the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic were absurd while the Syrian Government opposed the essence of peacekeeping by prolonging violence in its own country. The Syrian Arab Republic was far from meeting its peacekeeping obligations when UNDOF personnel had been kidnapped in the country, leading to the Force's withdrawal from its positions. It was unsurprising that the Syrian representative had attempted to divert attention from the Syrian Government's use of conventional and unconventional weapons against its own civilians by making such statements at a meeting of the Committee. With many terrorist organizations and the army of the Syrian Arab Republic in close proximity to the northern borders of Israel, the Israeli Government understood the importance of peacekeeping and looked forward to supporting the work of peacekeeping troops.

88. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation rejected the remarks of the representative of Israel regarding the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. It was used to hearing such comments, which were designed to divert attention from the occupation of the Syrian Golan and the funding of UNDOF. The time allocated to the Committee was too short to detail the crimes of Israel against the Palestinians and Syrians who had lived under Israeli occupation for the previous half century. The General Assembly, the Security Council and all other United Nations institutions had adopted many resolutions condemning those crimes. The representative of Israel would not, however, be able to divert attention from his country's crimes by drawing attention to the Syrian crisis, although Israel and the other States responsible for the crisis had been working with the armed terrorist groups to prolong it. As documented in various reports of the Secretary-General, it was Israel and other well-known States that had kidnapped the UNDOF personnel. The representative of Israel was mistaken if he believed that the crisis would make the Syrian people lose sight of who was their true enemy or make them forget their territory in the occupied Syrian Golan, which would sooner or later be returned to the Syrian Arab Republic.

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*

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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 30th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 3 May 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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Agenda item 157: Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Agenda item 163: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 136: Improving the financial situation of the United Nations** (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management), accompanying his statement* with a digital slide presentation, said that he would focus on four main financial indicators: assessments issued, unpaid assessed contributions, available cash resources and outstanding payments to Member States in respect of three budget categories: the regular budget, peacekeeping and the international tribunals. Overall, those indicators remained generally sound and positive, although some areas would need to be closely monitored in 2017.

2. At the end of 2016, unpaid assessments had been lower than at the end of the previous year in all areas except peacekeeping. The increase in unpaid peacekeeping assessments in 2016 had been directly related to the increase in peacekeeping assessments in that year, as it had not been possible to issue half of the peacekeeping assessments for the 2015/16 fiscal year until after the adoption in December 2015 of the scale of assessments for the period from 2016 to 2018. Cash balances at the end of 2016 had been positive for peacekeeping and the tribunals, but the regular budget had continued to show a pattern of tightness in the final quarter.

3. At the end of April 2017, unpaid assessments had been lower than one year earlier in all categories. Cash balances were positive for all areas, but regular budget cash was expected to tighten again towards the end of the year.

4. With regard to troop costs and contingent-owned equipment, the level of outstanding payments to Member States had been lower at the end of 2016 than the previous year. The Secretariat would continue to make every effort to expedite outstanding payments to Member States in 2017.

5. Concerning the regular budget, assessments had been issued in 2017 at a level of $2.578 billion, $29 million higher than in 2016, and $1.6 billion in payments had been received by 30 April. Unpaid assessments had amounted to $1.4 billion as at 30 April 2016, $8 million lower than one year earlier. By the end of 2016, 145 Member States had paid their regular budget assessments in full, 3 more than in 2015. He urged the remaining Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full as soon as possible. Outstanding contributions had decreased significantly in the last quarter of 2016. They continued to be concentrated among a few Member States, whose actions in the months ahead would largely determine the final financial picture for 2017. He acknowledged that differences in the financial years of Member States and the timing of the related national legislative processes could affect prompt payment by some Member States. By 30 April 2017, 92 Member States had paid their assessments to the regular budget in full, 13 more than by 30 April 2016.

6. Cash resources available for the regular budget under the General Fund included the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account. The regular budget cash shortfalls in the last months of 2016 had been covered by the reserves and through cross-borrowing from other accounts. The final position as at 31 December 2016 had reflected a $123 million cash shortfall under the regular budget, which had been covered by the Working Capital Fund. Regular budget cash had increased to $632 million as a result of the contributions from Member States in the early months of 2017, but it would continue to face pressure given the current reduced level of reserves resulting from General Assembly decisions on the use of the Special Account, which was at a level of $200 million, while the level of the Working Capital Fund was authorized at $150 million, and from General Assembly action to finance a significant level of activities with commitment authority, without assessment, during the biennium 2016-2017. The final cash position at the end of 2017 would depend largely on payments from Member States in coming months.

7. Peacekeeping operations had a different financial period from the regular budget, and ran from 1 July to 30 June rather than the calendar year. Moreover, separate assessments were issued for each operation and, since assessments could only be issued for the mandate period authorized by the Security Council for each mission, they were issued for different periods throughout the year. All those factors complicated a comparison between budgets for peacekeeping operations and other budgets.

8. At the end of 2016, unpaid assessments for peacekeeping operations had totalled $1.8 billion, an increase of $826 million compared with the $976 million outstanding at the end of 2015. As at 30 April 2017, new assessments of $1.2 billion had been issued and the level of unpaid assessments had been reduced to under $1.7 billion. That amount included assessments of $396 million issued the previous week following the extension of the mandates of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

* Subsequently circulated as document A/71/440/Add.1.

(MONUSCO) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

9. As at 30 April 2017, unpaid assessments had continued to be concentrated among a few Member States, the result of differences in the financial years of Member States and the timing of the related national legislative processes. That was a particular challenge in respect of peacekeeping operations, as letters of assessment were issued throughout the year for different missions whenever the Security Council renewed the respective mandates. By 31 December 2016, 24 Member States had paid all peacekeeping assessments in full; a total of 48 Member States had done so by 30 April 2017.

10. Although the total cash available for peacekeeping, including the reserve, had amounted to $2.8 billion at the end of 2016, that amount was segregated in accordance with the decision of the Assembly to maintain separate accounts for each operation. The Assembly had specified that no peacekeeping mission should be financed by borrowing from other active peacekeeping missions. The use of the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund was restricted to new operations and expansions of existing operations. At the end of 2016, peacekeeping cash had consisted of approximately $2.5 billion in the accounts of active missions, $217 million in closed mission accounts, and $138 million in the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund.

11. With regard to outstanding payments to Member States, the total amount owed had decreased to $808 million at the end of 2016 from $824 million at the start of that year. The Secretariat would continue to accelerate payments and reduce the amount owed for troops, formed police units and contingent-owned equipment. The $777 million owed at 31 March 2017 comprised $225 million for troops and formed police units, $466 million for contingent-owned equipment claims for active missions and $86 million for such claims for closed missions. However, reimbursements would be kept current and the total amount owed was projected to decrease to $804 million at the end of 2017.

12. The Secretary-General was committed to meeting obligations to Member States providing troops and equipment as expeditiously as the cash situation permitted. The Secretariat monitored the peacekeeping cash flow situation constantly with a view to maximizing payments, but depended on Member States' meeting their financial obligations and on the expeditious finalization of memorandums of understanding with troop-contributing countries.

13. The financial position of the two international tribunals at the end of 2016 remained sound. The amount outstanding at the end of 2016 had decreased to $40 million from $65 million one year earlier. By the end of 2016, 116 Member States had paid their assessed contributions for the international tribunals in full, 9 more than a year earlier; other Member States were urged to follow their example. As at 30 April 2017, outstanding assessments had amounted to $91 million, with 64 Member States having paid their assessed contributions for both tribunals and the International Residual Mechanism in full, 12 more than a year earlier. The month-by-month position of cash balances for the tribunals had been positive in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Since 30 April 2017, two Member States had made payments in an amount of $6.9 million. Once again, the final outcome for 2017 would depend on Member States' continuing to honour their financial obligations for the tribunals.

14. In conclusion, he paid tribute to those Member States that had paid all assessments in full. The financial situation was generally sound, with increases in the number of Member States that had met their obligations in full in every category and a lower level of unpaid assessments in all categories than one year earlier. However, unpaid regular budget assessments continued to be highly concentrated and the final position of the regular budget for 2017 would depend on action by the remaining Member States. In recent years, the last quarter had continued to be difficult for regular budget cash. It had been necessary to draw significantly on the regular budget cash reserves, both the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account, during the final months of 2016. Those reserves had proved insufficient, and cross-borrowing from other accounts had been necessary. The time had come to review the level of reserves in the light of that experience.

15. While the overall United Nations cash situation was positive for all categories as at 30 April 2017, regular budget cash was expected to tighten again towards the end of the year. The Secretariat would continue to monitor the cash flow closely and ensure rigorous financial management. An increased number of Member States were making timely contributions to peacekeeping operations and the Secretariat was making every effort to expedite outstanding payments in respect of troops and formed police units, and contingent-owned equipment claims. As always, the financial health of the Organization depended on Member States' meeting their financial obligations in full and on time.

16. **Mr. Sánchez Azcuy** (Cuba) requested the Secretariat to include in future such presentations, information regarding the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account for at least the previous three budgets, to afford a better comparison of the tight situation of the regular budget in the last quarter. Such a comparison would forestall accusations from some delegations that the money in the Fund and the Account was lying idle. The Fund and the Account were used to resolve the cash situation of the Organization, which depended to a high degree on budgetary contributions from a single Member State that did not pay its contributions until the end of the year because of its internal political process. He sought clarification regarding the reasons for and the resolutions in accordance with which withdrawals had been made from the Special Account. His delegation objected to the use of the regular budget cash reserves, in particular the Special Account, to finance the recosting exercise and offset deficits in the capital master plan, which exceeded the remit of the Fund and the Account.

17. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management) said that the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account were essential to easing the cash flow situation of the regular budget. As a result of increases in the regular budget, the General Assembly had decided in 2006 to raise the Fund's level from $100 million to $150 million, but the budget had continued to increase since that time. The Assembly had subsequently decided to use the Special Account to help finance the 2012-2013 regular budget and the final shortfall under the capital master plan. As a result, the level of the Account had been reduced to approximately $200 million, and the Secretariat had appealed to the Member States not to exhaust the Account. The Committee might consider reviewing the level of the Fund and the Account, since the combined regular budget cash reserves of $350 million were enough to finance Secretariat cash expenditure for only six weeks.

**Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations** (*continued*) (A/71/835 and A/71/836/Add.9)

*Budget for the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018*

18. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the budget of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/835), said that, since its establishment in 2010 as a pillar of the global field support strategy, the Centre had been essential to the Secretariat's efforts to reduce costs for field missions and improve the effectiveness of operations. The implementation of Umoja had enabled the Centre to provide shared, transactional and non-location-dependent administrative services in the areas of human resources, finance, transportation and movement control to more than two thirds of the individual personnel deployed in peacekeeping and special political missions. Since the deployment of Umoja cluster 5, which had enabled automated payroll processing, the Centre had been providing payroll services to the missions in Africa that it had not previously supported, pending the General Assembly's decision on the global service delivery model. During the 2017/18 period, the Centre was expected to provide support for the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

19. The proposed 2017/18 budget amounted to $37.3 million, 5.0 per cent less than the approved 2016/17 budget. The Secretary-General proposed that, with effect from 1 July 2017, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) should be added to the Centre's portfolio of clients. Owing to the inclusion of MINURSO, the expansion of the Centre's client base and the temporary provision of payroll services to all missions in Africa, the Secretary-General proposed that 18 posts and positions should be established at the Centre.

20. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/836/Add.9), said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $3,771,200 in the proposed budget of the Regional Service Centre. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposal that MINURSO should become a client of the Centre, the Advisory Committee recalled that the Secretary-General was to submit to the General Assembly at the main part of its seventy-second session a report on the global service delivery model. While the Advisory Committee did not object to the provision of payroll services for five additional missions as an interim arrangement to support the implementation of Umoja, changes to the service delivery model must be approved by the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution 70/248 A.

21. The Advisory Committee did not object to the Secretary-General's proposal that the Centre's cross-functional service lines should be restructured on the basis of the categories of international staff, national

staff and uniformed personnel, and trusted that the restructuring would improve efficiency. The Secretary-General should refine the scalability model to include the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre and Regional Information and Communications Technology Services. Since the General Assembly had decided that the Centre should have operational and managerial independence and report directly to the Department of Field Support, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to refine the proposed governance arrangements and provide an update on the matter in his next report on the Centre.

22. The Advisory Committee recommended against the proposed establishment at the Centre of eight national General Service posts, in accordance with the recommendation, in its report on the budget performance for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 of MINURSO (A/71/836/Add.1), that the posts should be included in the budget for the Mission. It did not object to the transfer of two payroll-related posts from MINURSO to the Centre. It made recommendations related to post resources and operational costs.

23. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Centre had been established following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/269 to provide shared services to missions in the region under the global field support strategy. The Secretary-General had stated in his third annual progress report on the implementation of the strategy (A/67/633) that the core of the strategy was to capitalize on potential synergies and economies of scale to deliver better and timelier support and reduce or eliminate waste, duplication and bottlenecks in logistical, administrative and financial support services. The Group welcomed the support provided by the Centre to seven peacekeeping operations, six special political missions and the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU); the addition of MINURSO and other missions in the region to the portfolio of missions supported by the Centre; and the proposed restructuring of the Centre's cross-functional service lines to take advantage of Umoja. The Group would seek further information regarding the advantages of the restructuring in supporting peacekeeping missions in the region and the proposed staffing structure, which would involve the reassignment of posts.

24. More than 60 per cent of peacekeeping missions were in Africa and should be supported from a hub in the same time zone. Taking into account the number of civilian personnel in those missions, training should also be conducted in the region. The Group welcomed the hosting by the Regional Training and Conference Centre of events for United Nations field missions in the region, for staff from Headquarters and other United Nations entities. The Regional Training and Conference Centre should be managed under the administration of the Regional Service Centre. The Secretariat should take advantage of the low cost of hosting a support centre for missions in Africa. Since the smooth functioning of the Regional Service Centre depended on its governance structure, the Group would seek further information regarding the roles of the client board and the steering committee. The Group would seek to ensure that the support component for all peacekeeping missions, in particular the provision of administrative functions, was efficient and accountable.

25. **Ms. Nalwanga** (Uganda) said that the global field support strategy was based on the principles that the Secretariat would provide strategic direction, exercise oversight and take policy decisions, but would not be involved in the business of operational and transactional service delivery; that global and regional service centres would take over most operational and transactional functions; and that the mission support component of field operations would be reduced, with only location-dependent activities performed in missions. Those principles were particularly relevant at a time when Member States, because of their own financial situations, were asking the Secretariat to do more with less. Her delegation would seek further information regarding the proposed governance structures at the Regional Service Centre. It supported the Secretary-General's proposals regarding the nationalization of posts at the Centre.

26. The principles of the global service delivery model were similar to those of the global field support strategy, and her delegation looked forward to seeing a cost-benefit analysis of the location of service centres. The General Assembly should consider the low cost of living and the family-friendly environment in Uganda, which would facilitate the work of peacekeeping staff. Her delegation welcomed the cooperation between the Secretariat and the Government of Uganda and pledged its support for United Nations programmes in the region.

**Agenda item 156: Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti** (A/71/679, A/71/787 and A/71/836/Add.12)

**Agenda item 157: Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo** (A/71/615, A/71/759, A/71/759/Corr.1, A/71/759/Corr.2 and A/71/836/Add.4)

**Agenda item 163: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur** (A/71/642, A/71/775 and A/71/836/Add.7)

27. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/679) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/787) for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), said that the Secretary-General had proposed a budget amounting to $336.6 million for the full 2017/18 period. Since the publication of the related report (A/71/787) and its consideration by the Advisory Committee, the Security Council had decided, in its resolution 2350 (2017), to close MINUSTAH by 15 October 2017 and to establish a follow-on peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). She had subsequently written a letter to the Chair of the Advisory Committee informing that Committee of the Council's decision, its financial implications and the Secretariat's intentions in that connection.

28. In the light of the ongoing review of modalities for the closure of MINUSTAH and the transition to MINUJUSTH, the Secretariat had informed the Advisory Committee of an indicative requirement of $153.2 million for the interim six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2017, estimated on the basis of the information available at that time. A comprehensive assessment would be undertaken with a view to presenting the budget for MINUJUSTH for the period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018 for consideration by the General Assembly at the main part of its seventy-second session. The Secretariat would begin immediately to reduce MINUSTAH tasks in a phased manner, ensuring that critical functions were maintained, and MINUSTAH would prioritize efforts to ensure a successful transition to MINUJUSTH.

29. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/615) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/759, A/71/759/Corr.1 and A/71/759/Corr.2) for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), she said that a budget of $38.0 million was proposed for 2017/18, representing an increase of 4.2 per cent compared with the budget for 2016/17. UNMIK would continue to strengthen and consolidate peace, security, the rule of law and stability in Kosovo and the region, including by strengthening its role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Kosovo through active engagement with Kosovo institutions.

30. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/642) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/775) for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), she said that the proposed budget of $1,023.1 million for 2017/18 represented a 0.7 per cent decrease compared with the approved resources for 2016/17. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), UNAMID would continue to transfer to the United Nations country team a number of tasks that were either no longer mandated or in which the country team had been identified as having a comparative advantage.

31. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on MINUSTAH (A/71/836/Add.12), said that the Advisory Committee's comments on the letter from the Controller were contained in paragraph 17 of the report.

32. In view of the decision of the Security Council in its resolution 2350 (2017), and taking into account the comprehensive assessment being undertaken by the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $105,000,000, with assessment, for the maintenance of MINUSTAH for the period from 1 July to 15 October 2017. The Advisory Committee expected that updated information on the resource requirements for the Mission would be provided to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the Committee's report (A/71/836/Add.12). The Advisory Committee's comments on the financing of MINUJUSTH were contained in paragraph 19 of its report.

33. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNMIK (A/71/836/Add.4), he said that it was a matter of concern that the cash position of the Mission did not cover the three-month operating cash reserve. The Advisory Committee recommended a number of reductions in the proposed requirements for consultancy and travel of staff and noted the status of vacant posts and positions in UNMIK. It also noted the efforts made by UNMIK to adjust the number of vehicles to the projected requirements for each

personnel category within the limits of the standard ratios. The Advisory Committee stressed the need for greater clarity with regard to redeployments of funds for use in programmatic and other activities within budgetary periods, underscoring that underexpenditures in the budget did not automatically justify the use of available funds for unbudgeted purposes.

34. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNAMID (A/71/836/Add.7), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended reductions amounting to approximately $15 million in the proposed budget for the Mission. Those reductions corresponded to the abolishment of seven posts proposed for reassignment and the application of higher vacancy rates than proposed. Further reductions were recommended in a number of categories, including consultancy, official travel, facilities and infrastructure, information technology, and communications. The Advisory Committee was concerned that UNAMID environmental efforts, in particular with respect to the generation of solar energy, remained mostly in the planning stages and expected that efforts would be strengthened in order to reduce the overall environmental footprint of UNAMID, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 69/307 and 70/286.

35. A joint African Union-United Nations report on the most recent strategic review of UNAMID would be submitted to the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council by May 2017. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would review the requirements of UNAMID in the light of any decisions taken by the Council following its consideration of the report, and, as appropriate, would present a revised budget for the requirements of the Mission.

36. **Ms. Nalwanga** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, as was reflected in the Secretary-General's overview report on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/71/809), total expenditure for peacekeeping operations for the 2015/16 period amounted to $8,017.4 million against an approved budget of $8,296.6 million, exclusive of budgeted voluntary contributions in kind. Financial resources for peacekeeping operations for the 2017/18 period were estimated at $7,971.6 million compared with the approved level of $7,888.9 million for the 2016/17 period, which represented a net increase of 1 per cent. The Group looked forward to consideration of the proposed budgets for each mission.

37. She recalled that, in General Assembly resolution 70/286, the Secretary-General had been requested to report on measures taken to expand the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. The Group looked forward to the finalization in 2017 of the comprehensive evaluation of measures taken to strengthen accountability for the integration of gender into mission mandate fulfilment and to provide strategic and technical support to all substantive components of missions, in line with the recommendations of the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

38. In its resolution 61/276, the General Assembly had affirmed the critical role of quick-impact projects in strengthening the link between missions and local populations, and, in its resolution 70/286, had requested the Secretary-General to enhance the impact of such projects while addressing underlying challenges. For the 2017/18 period, a budget of $18 million was proposed for the implementation of quick-impact projects across nine peacekeeping missions, compared with $20 million for the 2016/17 period, a difference that reflected the closing of UNOCI. The Group requested the Secretary-General to clarify the distinction between quick-impact projects and programmatic activities and to revisit the budget ceiling for quick-impact projects.

39. The Group took note of the triennial meeting of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment held in January 2017 and looked forward to informal consultations on the related agenda item. The issue of reducing the burden on troop- and police-contributing countries resulting from delays in reimbursements for contingent-owned equipment must also be addressed.

40. She recalled that the United Nations currently supported 17 active peacekeeping operations: 14 peacekeeping missions funded under individual special accounts and 3 peacekeeping missions funded under the programme budget: the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia. The Security Council had mandated the withdrawal of UNOCI by 30 April 2017 and the withdrawal of UNMIL by 30 April 2018 in its resolutions 2284 (2016) and 2333 (2016), respectively. The overall proposed resource requirements for the 2017/18 period reflected cost reductions associated with the closing of UNOCI, the withdrawal of UNMIL and the reconfiguration and streamlining of operations in UNAMID, MINUSTAH and MONUSCO.

41. The Group trusted that further clarification would be provided with regard to the drawdown of MINUSTAH and the transition to MINUJUSTH, and that all relevant budgetary rules and procedures would be followed to enable an orderly transition that did not adversely affect mandate implementation on the ground.

42. The Group welcomed the progress made in strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, in particular the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security in April 2017. It also looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on options for joint planning, mandating and financing of African Union peace support operations, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2320 (2016), and reiterated that assessed contributions were the most reliable and sustainable source of support for such operations.

43. With regard to MONUSCO, the Group welcomed the successful implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement signed on 31 December 2016 and noted that a strategic review of the Mission was expected by 30 September 2017. It trusted that any reductions in the military and civilian components of MONUSCO would take into account the need for effective mandate implementation and would be applied in consultation with the host Government and other stakeholders.

44. UNAMID was an innovative model of partnership between the United Nations and the African Union that had significantly contributed to supporting peace, national reconciliation and the protection of civilians in Darfur. The Group took note of the proposed budget for the mission for 2017/18, which would ensure that UNAMID had adequate resources to discharge its mandated objective of achieving a lasting political solution and sustained security in Darfur. The Group would closely examine the budget performance report for the Mission (A/71/642), particularly the information on the environmental impact of its activities and consistency in the recording of expenditure items. It would also seek further clarification regarding steps taken to transfer a number of the Mission's tasks to the United Nations country team, as well as details on the impact of community stabilization projects on local populations with a view to determining whether funding for such projects should be enhanced. Lastly, the Group would seek clarification regarding the rationale behind the changes proposed by the Secretary-General to the organizational structure of UNAMID and their impact on the work of the Mission.

45. **Mr. Funes Henríquez** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the Community reaffirmed its solidarity with Haiti and recognized the importance of international efforts to support the country's national priorities. The member countries of CELAC had demonstrated their commitment to placing the Haitian people on the path to stability, peace and development by contributing most of the military and police personnel to MINUSTAH and providing technical cooperation, humanitarian assistance and medical teams through bilateral channels, regional organizations and the United Nations system. They were proud of the Mission's work, particularly the exemplary operational performance of its military component. Noting the Security Council's decision to extend the Mission's mandate for a final period of six months and to establish a follow-on peacekeeping mission, she stressed that MINUJUSTH would receive the same support from CELAC that MINUSTAH had historically received.

46. The gains achieved by MINUSTAH, particularly in the area of security, must be protected, even as its functions were transferred to MINUJUSTH, the Government and the country team. The country's vulnerability to humanitarian crises, health problems and other social challenges highlighted the importance of the ongoing presence and involvement of the international community and the need to make it clear that the United Nations would continue to support Haiti. In that connection, discussions of the MINUSTAH budget should take into account the Mission's role in strengthening institutions, the rule of law, human rights and the security of personnel on the ground.

47. An adequate level of resources should be provided for programmatic activities in order to strengthen the peacebuilding agenda. Given their importance for fostering sustainable peace and security, community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects should be maintained by MINUJUSTH, in line with the priorities of the Government of Haiti. CELAC was in favour of the commitment authority recommended by the Advisory Committee for the maintenance of MINUSTAH for the period from 1 July to 15 October 2017 and looked forward to consideration of the budget for MINUJUSTH during the main part of the General Assembly's seventy-second session.

48. CELAC rejected arbitrary reductions in the Mission's resources without technical justification. The budgets of MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH, like those of other peacekeeping missions, should be based on

technical criteria, including the situation on the ground and the related Security Council mandates, rather than on artificial budget ceilings. He urged all Member States to continue to support reconstruction, stabilization and development efforts in Haiti.

49. **Ms. Barbosa Lima Côrtes** (Brazil) said that MINUSTAH had been a uniquely successful mission, having deployed more than 110,000 soldiers from Latin America and around the world to assist national authorities in ensuring a secure and stable environment for the Haitian people and supporting the country's reconstruction after natural disasters. For 13 years, Brazil had contributed troops and exercised military command over MINUSTAH. Countries in her region were proud of the contribution of the Mission's military component to the successful implementation of its mandate.

50. Throughout its deployment, MINUSTAH had been fully committed to implementing its mandate and had had no problems with undeclared caveats, lack of effective command and control, refusal to obey orders, failure to respond to attacks on civilians, or inadequate equipment. Although the Mission had encountered setbacks, attempts to undermine its legacy were ill-conceived, misleading and irresponsible.

51. Despite the progress made, many challenges remained. In that regard, her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish a new peacekeeping mission in Haiti to continue to assist the Government in its efforts to strengthen public institutions, the rule of law, police capacity and human rights. As the Mission was gradually phased out, the Organization must acknowledge its achievements and apply lessons learned and best practices identified. The General Assembly must allocate the resources necessary to enable the responsible and orderly liquidation of MINUSTAH, taking into account the situation on the ground. MINUJUSTH must also receive adequate funds to ensure the full implementation of its mandated tasks and programmatic activities, including community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects.

52. **Mr. Chavarri Cabello** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, in line with its historic commitment to ensuring the stability and welfare of the Haitian people, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was actively engaging in bilateral cooperation with the Haitian authorities in order to support the development and political and social stability of a free and sovereign Haiti.

53. While MINUSTAH had increased stability in Haiti since its launch in 2004, continued efforts were required to strengthen the rule of law and public institutions in the country. In that regard, his delegation was paying close attention to the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on the budget performance and financing of MINUSTAH and looked forward to reviewing the proposed budget for MINUJUSTH at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. During the transition to MINUJUSTH, adequate logistical and budgetary resources must be provided to ensure the continuation of quick-impact projects and other initiatives aimed at building the capacities of the Haitian National Police and strengthening key justice institutions in Haiti, which had contributed significantly to the Mission's success to date. Cooperation mechanisms must also be strengthened in order to support a successful transition from emergency humanitarian interventions to development-oriented programmes. In that connection, planned reductions in peacekeeping budgets must not affect existing programmes in Haiti, and the Committee must ensure that MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH had adequate resources to fulfil their mandates.

54. **Ms. Nikodijević** (Serbia) said that the role of UNMIK was of critical importance to her country. Because of the lack of inter-ethnic trust in Kosovo and the region, the Mission's presence and status-neutral approach, based on Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), were indispensable to the implementation of the agreements reached between Belgrade and Pristina in the framework of the European Union-facilitated dialogue. In view of the Mission's substantive role in preserving long-term stability in the province, its mandate should be maintained and the scope of its activities enhanced. Her delegation agreed with the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General in his report on UNMIK to the Security Council (S/2017/95) on the need to ensure that UNMIK had appropriate resources to address current and emerging challenges, including the fragile reconciliation process and the evolving threat of violent extremism.

55. The United Nations must take a proactive approach to the question of Kosovo and Metohija. The recurring tendency to marginalize the Mission within the United Nations and reduce its personnel and financial capacities was counter-intuitive and detrimental in view of the ongoing challenges in the field. Increasing the visibility of UNMIK on the ground would enhance the readiness of Serbs and other non-Albanians to participate in the implementation of the agreements emanating from the European Union-facilitated dialogue and encourage the long-term normalization of relations between Belgrade and

Pristina, in line with the objectives outlined in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report (A/71/759).

56. The reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on UNMIK provided a solid basis for negotiations on that agenda item. Serbia supported the implementation of programmatic activities and concrete projects in line with mandated objectives across all peacekeeping missions. Notwithstanding the welcome increase in the Mission's budget proposed by the Secretary-General, in the light of the complex political and security situation in the province, additional increases should be considered with a view to enhancing programmatic activities and confidence-building projects designed to strengthen the rule of law, human rights and reconciliation among communities.

57. The numerous ongoing challenges in the field had been highlighted in the Secretary-General's quarterly reports on UNMIK to the Security Council and the memorandum of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights following his mission to Kosovo in February 2017, in which he had expressed concern at the deeply ingrained ethnic divisions 18 years after the conflict. The substantive component of UNMIK, including its personnel, must therefore be enhanced, in particular to enable the implementation of projects aimed at ensuring the sustainable return of internally displaced persons, one of the Mission's main tasks. Only 1.9 per cent of internally displaced persons had returned permanently to Kosovo and Metohija since June 1999; less than 30 per cent of them were Serbs, and more than 200,000 internally displaced persons still lived in the central part of Serbia, while the other 17,000 were displaced within Kosovo and Metohija itself. In his report (A/71/759), the Secretary-General had emphasized the importance of facilitating the return and integration of internally displaced persons in the context of programmatic activities to enhance reconciliation among communities.

58. The high incidence of attacks against minority communities in Kosovo and Metohija, of which there had been more than 8,000 since 1999, demonstrated the need to strengthen the Mission's personnel and programmatic capacities in areas related to the human rights of non-Albanian communities. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/71/759), the United Nations continuously assessed the impact on the ground of changes in the configuration of other international actors. Given the implications of those changes for the Mission's ability to fulfil its mandate, some of its components must be strengthened.

59. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposals to retain existing posts and establish new ones within UNMIK. However, given the anticipated increase in the workload related to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the drastic reduction in European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) staff from 8 to 3, more than one position of United Nations police officer should be established to perform functions related to INTERPOL. Adequate personnel capacities were essential for ensuring cooperation between UNMIK and INTERPOL in a status-neutral manner.

60. Serbia did not understand the Advisory Committee's request for the Secretary-General to provide additional justification for retaining three existing posts: one Chief Legal Affairs Officer post (D-1), one D-1 post in the Office of Community Support and Facilitation and one P-4 post in the Mitrovica Regional Office. That recommendation had been made in respect of UNMIK alone and, if applied across all peacekeeping missions, would result in requests for justification of every existing post. Long-standing vacancies in the Mission must be filled expeditiously, as recommended by the Advisory Committee. In that connection, her delegation would request the Secretariat to provide a table listing the vacant positions, the dates when they had become vacant, and the dates on which the related recruitment processes had begun.

61. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic) said that MINUJUSTH would be mandated to strengthen the capacities of national institutions in Haiti in order to ensure that the Government was in a position to assume its full responsibilities after the transition. Haiti was prepared to build on the political stability achieved, as evidenced by the success of its recent presidential elections and the end of the transition phase.

62. The Dominican Republic expected that MINUJUSTH would work with the Government to strengthen institutional capacities, particularly in the areas of the rule of law, police and human rights, and underscored its commitment to supporting Haiti in those efforts. In that connection, the President of his country had engaged in productive discussions with the new President of Haiti that had focused on social, economic and environmental initiatives of mutual importance to both countries.

63. His country concurred with the views expressed by the Advisory Committee on the need to support the Secretary-General in ensuring that necessary financial resources were provided to continue assisting Haiti.

The Dominican Republic supported the vision of the Haitian authorities for a peaceful, just, stable and prosperous Haiti.

64. **Ms. Vásquez Islame** (Chile) said that the focus on the link between security and development as a means of achieving sustainable peace had been a cornerstone of MINUSTAH since its establishment. The continuation of United Nations support for Haiti was critical at the current juncture. Her delegation agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to ensure a responsible transition to MINUJUSTH, anchored in the achievements of the previous 13 years and the commitment of the international community.

65. Adequate financing must continue to be provided for quick-impact projects and community violence reduction programmes, which had played a critical role in consolidating stability and helping the people of Haiti, including through initiatives aimed at improving access to water and sanitation. In order to preserve the gains of the Mission, the Committee must ensure the predictable, flexible and efficient provision of resources to enable an effective transition to MINUJUSTH, taking into account the situation on the ground and the need to avoid security gaps.

*The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.*